



Angels  
of  
Wrath<sup>2</sup>  
SERIES

Six

Paulina Ian-Kane

Six

**Angels of Wrath Book 2**

[OceanofPDF.com](http://OceanofPDF.com)

Paulina Ian-Kane



Paulina Ian-Kane Books

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# Introduction

## **Main and recurring characters:**

The seven foster brothers named after the Angels of Wrath

One, Michael Caldwell, Raph's boyfriend

Two, Raphael "Raph" Bear-Stone

Six, Raguel "Rague" Carver

Uriel "Uri" Mahoe

Gabriel "Gabe" Reed

Ramiel "Rami" Masters

Sariel "Sari" Bear-Stone

## **Mothers**

Doc. Megan Katherine Bear

Agent Linda Stone

Clover, thief, works with the brothers

## **Linda's code:**



Kids and pets always have to be protected  
Be one-hundred-percent sure the donor deserves it  
No revenge kills alone  
Ask your bros for help  
Let your anchor keep you grounded

**TRIGGERS:**

This story contains dark themes and potential triggers, including but not limited to:

Degradation, praise, voyeurism, rough sex and scenes that may contain dubious usage of proper lubricants, physical abuse (father hitting his son), scene discussion and imagery regarding abuse, drugs, addiction, talking about experimentation and torture on children, explicit language and sexual situations, and more.

There is torture (of very bad people) with bloody, gory, disturbing (for some) scenes throughout the book. There's a brief reference to homophobia. Please keep these potential triggers in mind, as your mental health is of the utmost importance.

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## **Playlist**

Cold Play - Green Eyes

Elle King - Can't Be Loved

Blondie - One way or Another

Radiohead- Creep

Sting - Every Breath You Take

Jeff Buckley- Hallelujah

Pink - Wild hearts

Pink ft. Chris Stapleton - Love Me Anyway

The characters in this book were inspired by the song “Something to feel”  
by Dixon Dallas.

Before diving into the story, go on your favorite music app and listen to it.

Even if you don't like country music I assure you you'll like this song...

because it's hot, hot, hot!

Better listening to it away from families and partners...unless you're as  
naughty as I am.

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## Prologue

Twenty years ago.

*Project: Blood Assassin*

*Subject: Six*

*Day 700*

*Time 7:30*

*The most recent surgery Subject Six underwent has provided us with some interesting new developments. Six's episodes have increased. His hostility and detached behavior are also growing, undeniable proof that we are progressing in the right direction.*

*During today's episode, Six broke both of his hands. The Subject's strength and endurance are extraordinary and will require further testing. However, three people were needed to hold him down in order to inject him with the usual dose of diazepam. The Subject looks and acts feral, blind to his surroundings. We're still unable to control him.*

*Also, the unmanageable seizures must be resolved. There's no room for weakness in the Project.*

*Unfortunately, the Subject refuses to talk and in doing so, he's withholding precious information. A more effective discipline, different from the one we instill in the other subjects, must be used on Six.*

*Another surgery is set for next week. It might be too early, but I don't see any reason why we should wait. Subject Six must be accustomed to it by now.*

*In order to achieve tangible improvements we need to double our efforts and work harder on every single subject.*

*Project Assassin has to go on, at all costs.*

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# Chapter 1

Present day

*RAGUEL*

A cacophony of shouts, laughter, booing, and curses surround me, echoing inside the dilapidated factory. The five-foot circular concrete wall does a good job of holding the crowd back but doesn't silence it. I can hear people chanting my fighting name.

*Hulk. Hulk. Hulk.*

They call me the Hulk because with a single punch I can put my opponent flat on the floor. These rocky muscles aren't only for show.

This level of chaos makes my brain hurt, and with my next breath, I attempt to tune it out. I focus my attention on one thing and one thing only: my opponent. I take him in. He's bouncing from one foot to the other, stretching one arm in front of his very hairy chest. A long scar mars his shaved head, his nose is crooked, and a couple of incisors are missing. He's

got more than some experience in this *field*, for sure, but he's not as big as me. Nobody is.

I'm certainly not the guy who disappears into the background. I stand the fuck out, at six-five and two-hundred-and-fifty pounds. I learned a long time ago that I don't have a choice but to be seen, even when I'd like to fade into the crowd. My innate serious expression—or as my brother, Rami, calls it, the perpetual lemon-sucking frown—makes me even more unapproachable. People who cross my path for the first time do a double-take when they see me. And then the fucking nervous glances begin.

At the moment, I have at least fifty pairs of eyes on me. I fucking hate being on display. But since I'm about to be part of a clandestine fighting match, the attention cannot be avoided.

I make my facial features as neutral as possible and turn my head slightly toward Rami, without taking my eyes off the fighter in front of me. I'd like to show him my heavily scarred back—it always intimidate others. But in these kinds of illegal matches, people like to play dirty, so the fucker will just have to admire my impressively wide torso. My brother is standing behind me, outside the unrefined fighting ring, a bottle of cheap vodka in his gloved hand. He's also a big motherfucker, a little shorter than me, but the people around him have taken a step back, cautious not to touch him. Good choice; he hates that.

He twists the lid off and lifts the bottle over my head, letting the strong liquor pour down my throat. I swallow some and spit the rest on the floor. Tastes like actual paint stripper—and I should know since I work in construction.

“Toy with him a bit,” Rami whispers, leaning closer to me over the wall, careful not to be heard. “Let the crowd enjoy it a little. We need to get the



boss's attention."

I give him a sharp nod while remembering the reason why I'm doing this. *This* being infiltrating an illegal fight ring to get closer to the guy who started it—the boss, Lenny Berko.

A few months ago, Rami *stumbled* onto a police file—from time to time he breaks into the police servers and scans open cases. My brother is a very skilled hacker, but he uses his *gift* with mostly good intentions. In the last four months, the bodies of seven teenagers have been found on the outskirts of Chicago. The cause of death is always the same: massive internal bleeding from the brain or other organs. From the coroner's autopsy reports and pictures, it's clear that the victims had received heavy beatings, their bodies covered in bruises and cuts, their knuckles and ribs broken.

My hands ball up at the memory of those battered, lifeless bodies left to rot in landfills and scrapyards like they meant nothing. But they did mean something, everything to their families and friends.

Carl Manner seventeen years old. Paul Cleeve sixteen. Gene Alvin Sloan eighteen. George Fallon sixteen. Sebastian Tom Jenkins nineteen. Fredrick Cole fifteen, and James Ian Patterson seventeen. I silently recite their name to remind myself why I'm doing this.

A year ago, Lenny Berko started this illegal fight business and it's more than a little suspicious that just two months later the bodies started to appear. The teens came from different parts of Chicago. No apparent connection between them. Only five of them were reported missing by the families. Why or how they got involved in all this is still unknown to us.

If Lenny is responsible for the deaths, it will be my deep pleasure to take care of him. I can't fucking stand crimes against kids—for very justifiable reasons.

Dark, painful images try to assault my mind, but I push them back down. I need to compartmentalize. Now is not the time to think about the past. I have a show to perform and a crowd to entertain. Lenny Berko has finally come to watch. Maybe he heard about my winning knockout. Maybe not. Either way, I need to impress him.

I brush my thumb against the long scar in the center of my palm. It's a comforting habit, the feel of the thick raised skin under my fingertip. It reminds me of the promise I made to my five *blood brothers* and to myself. It reminds me of why we do this.

A loud ding takes me back to the present. There's no announcer here. The bell rings and the match starts. It doesn't stop until one of the fighters is knocked to the floor.

I exhale, letting coldness seep inside my body. Icy calmness wraps around my emotions and my tunnel vision zeros in on my opponent. He advances, his taped hands up in front of his chin, still bouncing on his feet, showing some nice ballerina footwork. I remain still, like an unmovable brick wall, fists down at my sides, body relaxed but alert.

When he throws his first punch, I know this is going to be over very soon—the guy is slower than a snail. I easily slip his jab, leaning to the left just enough to take my head off the punching line while maintaining my balance. I could slug him in the side, he left it wide open, but decide against it. I have to play the part, to make it interesting.

Begrudgingly, I let him land some body shots on my front, tightening my abs and pecs. I have to admit, the guy's hook is not that bad. It makes me grunt...slightly. After a few minutes of this dance, he's sweating profusely already, his movements turning sluggish. I can smell the sour stench of alcohol coming from his pores.

I bring my shoulder to my chin and turn my hips away, watching his punch slide harmlessly off it. He loses his balance and falls straight into the ecstatic crowd. They love this shit.

While the elated audience unceremoniously pushes the fighter back into the ring, I glance at Rami. My brother signals me with a tilt of his head. *Time to end this.*

As soon as the other fighter stumbles and turns my way, I raise my arm with the elbow parallel to the floor, shift my weight to my right foot, and throw an effective and powerful uppercut through my hip, torso, and shoulder. A whoosh sound comes from my mouth as air escapes my lungs when my knuckles connect hard with the area beneath his chin.

The punch is so explosive that his head snaps back, his whole body arches, and his feet leave the floor for a half-second as he floats in the air before hitting the ground with a disturbing thud.

A moment of dead silence, and then a booming sound detonates from the crowd.

*Hulk. Hulk. Hulk.*

My heart is racing, breath quickly leaving my lungs.

Out of the corner of my eye, I can see people jumping and cheering, but my gaze is on the blond guy to my right, the one flanked by two bodyguards. Lenny's sly smile is directed at me, eyes filled with dollar signs. It looks like he found his new golden goose. Me.

I incline my head in greeting, and he raises his clapping hands in response. I feel an instinctual animosity toward the motherfucker.

He turns to Rami, my *manager*, and waves at him to come closer—hopefully to talk business. My job is done.

I jump over the small wall into the crowd. People hurriedly make space for me. A few reckless fuckers pat me on the shoulder, backing up when they meet my glower. I quickly head toward the ancient bathroom where I left my stuff earlier. I walk down a long dusty corridor. The place was a button factory once upon a time. Been abandoned for more than thirty years and is now used to hold clandestine fights.

Nobody follows me. People know by now that I don't like to interact after a fight. Or before. Or at all, actually. Plus, the next match will start soon, and the crowd is surely busy making more bets.

I enter the bathroom, moving past the three dull cast-iron sinks to stop near my bag on the wooden bench. I don't attempt to reach for it. I just stand there for a minute. I let my head fall forward, my fingers unfurl near my thighs, and I will my heart to slow down. My tunnel vision eases up, and I'm able to take in details again. The deep cracks running through the bench. The strong smell of mold and sweat. The slight ache in my muscles after being coiled tight during the fight. The distant sound of people yelling. I inhale deeply and let it out slowly.

I need to decompress. To let the adrenaline still pumping through my veins go. Otherwise, the irrepressible energy will turn into something dark, something that reminds me of a small brick room and the two scientists who experimented on me.

When I was just a kid, I was kidnapped—not that my crack whore of a biological mother cared. Those scientists kept me locked inside a facility and used me as a lab rat for their unsanctioned project. I was rescued years later, and only then discovered that I wasn't the only one imprisoned there. There had been other kids. Seven in total. Six of us were moved to a group home, and our foster mothers, Meg and Linda, raised us as their own and

helped us to reacquaint ourselves with societal norms. Michael was adopted by another family—very long story there.

We later learned that we were chosen by the scientists because of our psychopathic traits, since the project was about creating unemotional assassins. But as we grew up, mine as well as Rami's, Sari's, Michael's and Gabe's faded away. Only Raph is a true psychopath, and my other brother, Uri, is a sociopath. We're all fucked up though, in one way or another. Years of torture tend to leave a mark. Or two.

My hand moves to touch the scars behind my ear, but as usual, stops before it makes contact. I let out a long sigh and decide to peel the white tape off my fingers.

Any trace of the rush from the fight is gone. My hands are steady. Years of meditation and self-soothing, learned from our psychiatrist mother, Meg, have served their purpose—along with other kinds of training. While other kids were learning how to play basketball or the guitar, in our free time, my brothers and I were taught combat, self-defense techniques, weapon use, and much more. Linda used to work for a few federal agencies and believed we would need these types of skills in the future. She was right.

I'm reaching for the wet wipes inside my bag when I hear someone enter the bathroom. I expect it to be Rami. But what I find when I turn my head is a young guy leaning against one of the sinks. He looks sweaty and there's some blood under his nose. Another fighter perhaps?

His arms are stretched behind him, hands curled around the edge of the basin, pushing out his chest covered in a thin pink tank top. His body isn't overly muscular, but well-toned. He's clearly in good shape. His dark red lips are stretched into an impish smirk. His angular face, pointy chin, and high cheekbones are softened by the lightest water-green eyes I've ever

seen. The left one has a large brown spot in it, taking up half of his iris. Peculiar, and at the same time, bewitching.

His gaze is utterly focused on me, precisely my scarred back. But I can't read any disgust, nor wariness in it. On the contrary, those green-mist orbs are shamelessly eye-fucking the shit out of my grey-sweats-clad ass.

"Hulk, right?" His voice is lower than I anticipated. Maybe he's older than he looks. Around twenty perhaps. I reply with a nod. Then I turn my eyes forward again and start wiping off the thin film of sweat from my face, chest, and neck.

"I saw you out there tonight. You're...impressive." His tone is suggestive, and I can feel his eyes still ogling me. Not the usual response I get from people, who are mostly never this bold.

"What do you want?" I ask, pulling on a white t-shirt and grabbing the brown Sherpa trucker jacket.

"I want to suck you off."

His words make my brain halt for a second, then I slowly turn toward him, keeping my face void of any emotion—mainly shock and curiosity. He hasn't moved, his eyes looking straight into mine with not a hint of fear.

His head tilts to the side, in a sort of curious birdlike pose. "Did you hear me?" He straightens from the sink and takes a step toward me.

I level him with a hard stare, but he just...chuckles.

"Coming is good after a fight."

Indeed, it is; it's the best way to destress, but I've never been propositioned so openly by a guy half my size in a filthy bathroom.

I raise an amused brow at him.

"What? I want to suck your brain out through your cock. I'm not asking to cut a strand of your hair and keep it in a locket around my neck." He huffs

with what sounds like annoyance, and both my brows skyrocket toward my hairline. Who is this guy? And why do I all of a sudden have to smother a smile?

“Is that a no?” He crosses his arms in front of his chest. I suspect he feels far less nonchalant than he’s letting on. “You don’t talk much, do you?”

“No,” I answer.

“No to the BJ or the talking?”

“Both,” I grunt, sliding on my trucker jacket.

“Why? Not into handsome dudes?” He pouts, pushing out those lush lips. A dark brown wavy lock falls from his half-ponytail to join the others under his chin. He looks so fucking young and delicate.

“Not into boys,” I clarify, more to myself than him, since my dick is weirdly not against it.

“Boys? Lower those pants, and I’ll show you how looks can be deceiving.” He smiles crookedly, his eyes dropping to my suddenly throbbing cock.

I give him a lingering once-over, as if his brazen statement deserves serious consideration. He’s too *breakable* for me.

“You can’t take me.” He opens his mouth, surely to give me another sassy retort, but I silence him by lifting my palm up. He pouts. I take a step closer to him and can’t miss the way he stiffens. So, he isn’t as chill as he seems around me. *Good.*

“I’m not gentle. I’d use you when I fuck your throat. I’d be rough and fast, and my hand tightening around your neck could make you lose consciousness. But I wouldn’t stop, I’d keep stuffing your mouth until I get my whole load inside your stomach. And after I was done, I’d forget about you.” I growl the last sentence because I don’t really think I could ever

forget him, even if this is the only time I'll ever see him. It's a weird, visceral feeling.

My vivid description doesn't seem to have the effect I hoped for. Instead of showing fear, his grin melts away and raw lust fills his eyes. His body is unconsciously leaning toward mine like I'm the siren and he's the powerless sailor.

I'd be lying if I said I'm not damn tempted. And the proof is crystal fucking clear. His eyes widen when they see my tented sweats, and he licks his lips eagerly.

Fuck! This is fifty or more shades of wrong. I need to get out of here.

"Hulky!" Rami's yelling announces his arrival just a second before he appears on the threshold. He stops dead, looks at us, specifically at our close proximity, and then sends me a very surprised and inquisitive glance.

The guy blinks rapidly, and as if coming out of a daze, he takes a step back. For a second, the distance between us bothers me. But I run a hand through my black curls, willing my brain to stop fucking around, and focus my attention on my brother.

"Am I interrupting something?" Rami asks with a teasing tone. I'm pretty sure his lips are quirked with humor, but I can't see them with all that dark red beard covering his lower face.

"Yes." The guy boldly replies at the same time I say, "No."

I feel his eyes on me again, but I force myself not to look in his direction.

"Oh, got it." Rami winks at us in the least subtle way possible.

I hear the guy's bemused sniff before he moves around me and pulls a shabby backpack out from under the bench. With his back to us, he dons an even *pinker* hoodie and hikes the black backpack's strap over one shoulder. He makes his way to the door and stops in front of Rami. My brother is



blocking the exit with his big body, but this guy doesn't seem unnerved by it.

They stare at each other for a couple of seconds—seemingly exchanging a silent conversation.

“I like you,” Rami eventually tells him before lifting his black gloved hands up and shifting to the side to give him space to leave.

“Who doesn't ?” The guy snorts at him and takes one step forward before halting again. Without turning my way, he lets me know, “My offer may not stand next time.” Then he's gone.

Rami whistles, grabbing the doorframe with both hands to lean out and watch him retreat. He then pulls himself back inside and closes the door, taking a couple of leisurely steps toward me. “What was that?”

I grunt and accept the bottle of water he hands me, chugging it down to avoid answering him.

“I feel like I witnessed something very dirty,” Rami says in a disturbing baby voice.

“You have a sick mind.”

“That I do, but I didn't imagine the *Basic Instinct* vibes in here. If I smoked I'd be in dire need of a cigarette right about now.” He whistles.

“What did Lenny tell you?” I ask him, wanting to distract him from whatever he thinks he saw.

I hope I'm right and the guy isn't a minor, because I'd feel like a fucking pervert with my attraction to the boy.

*A very naughty boy.* Where the fuck did that come from?

“The fucker wants you to fight again next week.” Rami's voice snaps me out of my weird as fuck thoughts, and I sigh. It's not that I don't enjoy

delivering punches, because I do. But I want to put an end to this. I'm dreading the thought of seeing another picture of a lifeless teen.

"If you win..."

"If?" I repeat incredulously.

Rami rolls his eyes at me. "*When* you win, Lenny will invite us to train at his gym."

Where his office is and luckily, any proof of his underage fighting ring. We haven't seen any young boys around, not on the nights I've fought. And Rami keeps a watch on the factory when I'm not. But nothing.

The guy that was just here is the youngest fighter I've seen, but he looked old enough, and fit as well. An image of his strong body flashes in front of my eyes, making my dick twitch. *Fucking hell.*

"I called Clover again," Rami says. Clover is a very skilled thief we contact when we need a *velvety* touch. "He's still in Japan for another week or so."

*Damn.*

"Come on, Hulky, three more weeks max, and then Lenny or whoever else is behind it, is all yours."

And when he says "all mine," he means I can kill them. Because that's what we do. My brothers and I make Chicago a safer place. *Cleaning* the streets more thoroughly. Taking care of untouchable and sometimes undetected vile people. Our help is unknown to the police, since our judge-jury-executioner methods are frowned upon in our society. But our horrific childhood experiences turned us into different kinds of individuals, ones who have peculiar needs. Whatever our reasoning, we all enjoy making evil people pay—mostly in a bloody way.

We follow the code Linda has instilled in us since we were kids, which, right at this moment, I loathe. Specifically, the rule about being one-

hundred-percent sure the fucker is guilty. I can see Lenny is bad news, and if it wasn't for the code, his bones would be melting in one of the acid barrels back at the base right this moment.

"Who was the twunk?" Rami asks, making me almost choke on my water. Almost.

"Who?" I fake ignorance.

"Riiiiight...Wink wink, nudge nudge." He's barely able to hold back his smile. "I'll get a background on him."

"Why? Do you think he has an ulterior motive for approaching me?" *Did Lenny send him?* I wouldn't be surprised; he's a suspicious fucker.

"Approaching you, ah? And how did he approach you?"

I flip him off and turn around to grab my bag. Exhaustion is starting to creep up on me.

"Don't turn all angry-green. The background check is just a precaution. And you should be more friendly toward him."

"Why?"

"He could know something of use for us, and you could get something of use from him...without paying for once." Rami sounds serious.

I give him a noncommittal hum. But I know what my brother means. I do pay professionals to fuck. They know what I like, and are ready to get it. Get me. I've been using the same escort agency for years now without any problem. I'm big and strong and like it rough. Like to dominate and use. No feelings, not a care about the other person's pleasure. It's uncomplicated. It's satisfying. It works for me.

That's why I need to stop imagining those odd green/brown eyes turning watery while he deepthroats the shit out of me.

“Rague, we need whatever information we can get. Lenny lives in the dark ages. No laptop. No digital presence. Not even a damn Facebook account. He has an old-ass flip phone, for fuck’s sake. I can’t work my usual magic. So, we need to do this the old, hard way.” Rami is right. We need to go old school here.

I grunt at him. I’m not good at...talking. It took me two weeks to have a full conversation with Michael, my brother’s boyfriend and new addition to our family.

“Did you get the sassy twunk’s name?”

“No,” I growl. Rami is not going to let this go. Ever.

“No problem.” He shifts his eyes away from me and says, “Serena darling, please check the street cameras and follow a guy with shoulder-length chestnut hair, a pink hoodie, black backpack, and grey jeans.”

Serena is Rami’s AI. He created *her* when he was in his teens. They are inseparable—virtually speaking. I don’t actually know how, but he’s able to communicate with her even from this rundown factory. Because of his devil-may-care attitude, I sometimes forget how extraordinarily intelligent Rami is.

“I gotta work tomorrow,” I tell him, not needing to explain more.

“I’ll stay and see if I can find out something more. Good job tonight, Hulky.”

I shake my head at the name while we head out. Rami has been calling me Hulky since we were kids. He finds it hilarious that the crowd chose Hulk for me. But the more I think about it, the surer I am that Rami had something to do with it. *Assface*.

He goes back to the screaming crowd, while my long strides take me quickly outside to the back of the factory. Here, out in the open, I can see

the white, misty clouds coming from my mouth. I don't feel the cold much, especially after a fight with the increase in my body temperature.

Snow covers the few cars scattered in the parking lot, the scorched wild grass, and the solitary street lamp. My old beat-up pickup looks fine tonight. It still sports the *fuck you* writing on the side—need to get it fixed. People who fight in this kind of illegal ring don't like to lose. Also, Washington Park, where the factory is located, is one of the most dangerous places to live in Chicago because of the extremely high violent crime rate. Hence the broken windshield and the slashed tires I've had to replace several times.

I get behind the wheel and start the engine. It's past midnight, and I'm in need of a quick shower and a long sleep. I didn't lie to Rami, I have work tomorrow. Owning a construction and demolition company with ten workers under me is tough. There's a lot to do in and out of the office. I prefer the out of the office part; I like to get my hands dirty. It keeps my head busy and my body in shape.

I like my job, but as Margery, my secretary, has told me many times over, I need to hire someone to share the burden with and help me in the office. I'm not the trusting type though, and even letting her partially deal with the customers has taken some getting used to.

My head shifts once again to the sassy *twunk*—as Rami called him. Our time together may have been brief but the instantaneous attraction I felt can't be denied. I just looked at him and felt my balls pull up tight. The way he openly ogled me and let me know he wanted to blow me. How he faced me fearlessly.

I haven't felt this level of curiosity and arousal toward someone in a very long time, if ever. He's far from my type. I usually go for sturdier guys able

to take a pounding and definitely older than him. But I could see his toughness, not only in his tight body. It was brave and reckless of him to come on to me like that. He has a backbone.

The entire drive, I try to push the encounter out of my head. I focus on the road and the *case*. The teens went to different schools, had different jobs, lived in different areas in the city, and only two of them used to hang out in the same circles, but were barely acquaintances. It almost looks like they were chosen randomly. By Lenny? He doesn't look like the kind of guy with that much brain. An illegal fight ring? Sure. Taking boys and beating them to death? I'm not sure. The teens all disappear a day or two before being killed—the autopsy reports show an approximate time of death and also reveal traces of a new drug in their blood. A mix of barbiturates and opioids, which are sedatives and suggest the theory of a kidnapping.

When I turn onto my gravel driveway and shut off the engine, I'm swallowed by silence. My house is quite isolated on a two-acre stretch of land. It's an old workers cottage that I restored all by myself. It looks even more quaint with all the snow turning everything white.

The creak of the wooden boards when I climb the small porch steps to the green front door tells me I'm home. I should fix that, but the sound has become comforting in a way.

The few times my brother, Raph, has come here, he's bitched about the plainness and ordinariness of it. He lives with Michael in a luxurious penthouse in Streeterville. He frequents only high-society places, so of course, my middle-class lifestyle is not for him.

I could've bought a bigger, more opulent place if I'd wanted to. I have enough money to last me the rest of my life and then some. My brother, Uri, who owns a few restaurant chains, also has a knack for the stock market. He

invested some of the money I made with my company. But even though I could get more, I don't need to. My cottage suits me just fine, and I believe is quite spacious for one person. What's more, I enjoy going to work every day. My aching muscles wish I didn't have to go tomorrow though, but a few hours of sleep will help with that.

I type in the code to turn off the house alarm as soon as I get inside and walk across the dark living room and down the corridor to the bathroom. I turn the bright spotlights on, and dropping the duffle bag on the floor, I quickly throw my dirty clothes into the hamper before stepping inside the large shower stall. The cold water hits my shoulders as I place my palms on the cool tiles and let my head fall back.

Out of nowhere, a vision of me staring at those light green eyes and pouty lips while the guy bounces on my dick rocks me. All my blood rushes to the southern regions of my body. My cock juts out, heavy and thick. My balls tingle.

Jesus Christ! I'm twenty-nine and never before has my body responded this vehemently and spontaneously to another guy. Certainly not to a boy barely in his twenties with a death wish.

I need to keep my head in the game.

I speedily wash and get out of the shower. After drying myself, I walk to my room to pull on a pair of briefs. I send a quick text to the escort agency letting them know I'm going to need one this weekend. The reply arrives quickly, with a date and time to confirm. As soon as I do, I take a big calming breath and sit on my bed.

My hand goes automatically to the guitar propped against the nightstand. I grab it and place it on my lap. My cock is still hard, not at the thought of the appointment I made, but at the memory of a mischievous smile and a slim,

but well-built body. His lean physique filled out those tight, worn jeans perfectly. His ass firm and round, a perfect bubble.

I realize just now that I'm humming "Green Eyes" by Coldplay while my fingers caress the guitar strings, forming the slow melody. Playing always soothes me. The notes and words fill my head, pushing away whatever thought or emotion clutters it.

But when my head touches the pillow and the dreamworld welcomes me, those soft green orbs follow me under.

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## Chapter 2

*OLIVER*

I adjust the backpack strap on my shoulder while I walk next to my brother, Sully, along the snowy sidewalk. The very early, bitterly frigid air is biting at my face, forcing me to push my nose down the neck of my hoodie. It's so fucking cold. I pull the cuffs of my purple hoodie further down my knuckles. The black puffer vest keeps my torso warm, but my legs, arms, and hands are freezing.

Sully looks warm enough, though. That's all that matters. His lanky body is engulfed in a too-big padded jacket, a yellow knit hat hides his short black hair, and the one-dollar rainbow wool gloves I bought from a thrift store cover his long delicate fingers. Thank God, he doesn't care about fashion and that his best friend in school, Brad, is built like the Rock.

He suddenly slips on an icy patch on the ground, and I'm ready for it, reflexively grabbing his arm to halt his fall. His legs make a wild gliding dance, sneakers sliding, making him spin around and clutch onto my

sleeves with a death grip. I widen my stance and let my shoes root more firmly on the asphalt, trying to stabilize him.

“Okay?” I ask while helping his body up into a straighter position. He nods but slips two more times before I slowly release him.

Sully is what people would call a klutz. The clumsiest and most uncoordinated person I’ve ever seen. He reminds me of a *Stan and Ollie* comedy sketch I once watched in high school during social studies. Although, they were actors pretending to be graceless and ungainly, Sully is actually gawky and all fingers and thumbs.

He’s seventeen and a proper nerd. He goes to one of the best public schools on the west side, and it takes forty minutes by bus to get there, but it’s worth it. I walk him to the bus stop every morning before going to work. It’s a sacrifice I’m willing to make if it means it will get him out of West Garfield Park and Dick’s claws. Richard, or Dick as we call him—by name and by nature—is our father, or as I like to label him, the sperm donor and scumbag.

We return to walking when he says, “The bruise on your face, is it from the last illegal fight?”

I turn to look at him. His big, soft eyes are on me—one green, the same shade as mine, and the other light brown. It’s called heterochromia, but while I have a sectoral one, only a large part of one iris is brown, my brother has complete heterochromia, the color of his eyes are different. I read somewhere that it’s a genetic condition, and since Dick has light blue eyes, it has to have come from our mother—wherever she is.

I scrunch my nose and feel the slight sting caused by the hit I took yesterday in the ring. My side hurts as well, but it’s nothing I’m not used to.

“Look, I know you fought again. I heard Dick talking about it with Lenny and his other friends.” *Friends...* more like lowlife dirtbags. Lenny included.

“We need money to get out of here, Sully. I can’t get enough from my job.”

“Dick takes almost all the money from the fights, and it’s dangerous, Ollie. Those people you fight against are dangerous. Like that Hulk guy you think is so cool.” His voice is full of worry.

I might have talked about Hulk a time or two. “I could never fight against him. He’s too big.” His cock is as well. I didn’t imagine the long, thick outline that pushed against his sweats. Just thinking about it makes me salivate.

“I could leave school and look for a job...”

I don’t let him finish. “We already talked about this. Absolutely not!”

“You left college, so it’s only fair that I...”

I cut him off again, halting my steps and grabbing his arm. “They were night classes at the community college, nothing major. You, on the other hand, need to finish school. You’re a straight-A student and can get a scholarship to one of those fancy colleges.”

His lips tilt up for a moment before they tighten in a long line again. “I’m worried, Ollie. If something happens to you...”

I sigh and then lean my forehead against his and close my eyes. “Nothing will happen to me. You can’t get rid of me that easily.” I pull back and smirk, trying to lighten the mood. I raise my arms up, assuming a bodybuilder pose to show him my biceps, and I silently tell him with a smoldering gaze, “Look at these babies.”

He snorts and answers with a look that says, “You’re an idiot!” But he can’t stop from smiling. *Mission accomplished.*

He looks so young, younger than his age. Maybe it's because of his pale skin, the delicate lines of his face, and big sweet eyes, in contrast with my slightly darker skin and angular features.

"You still lied to me," Sully reminds me, and I wince, knowing what's about to come. "I want my apology dance," he adds, as I expected.

"No!" I resume our walk. One night, a couple of years back, I was three sheets to the wind and came up with the fucking dance idea whenever one of us *misbehave*.

"Yes!" He follows me.

"No way, Jose. I already did it when I killed that spider the other day."

Sully wants to become a vet, and therefore, every animal or thing that crawls or flies shouldn't be harmed. Except mosquitos. I draw the line there.

"Ollie." He adorably pouts. Shit! Cannot resist the cuteness. And the little fucker knows it and uses it against me any chance he gets.

"Damn it! I hate you," I bark without any heat behind it.

"No, you adore me. Now give it to me." He smiles smugly. Sometimes I forget how cunning he can be when he wants something—cunning in an utterly unassuming way.

I clear my throat, and darting my eyes around to make sure nobody will witness the embarrassing scene, I start shaking my butt and chest like I've been hit by lightning. I wave my arms in a sort of horrible hula dance while I sing, "I'm naughty, I'm bad like Michael J. said. You were right, and I was...wrong. I won't forget where I belong."

"And where is that?" he cheers.

"Fire pants hell," I grunt this last part.

When I stop, Sully is chuckling, a colorful glove covering his crooked front incisor. I smother my smile because he kind of forced me to make a fool of myself. But my brother's snorting laugh is infectious.

"God, your singing is the worst, and you looked too ridiculous." He wipes a tear from the corner of his eye.

"Wha, wha, wha," I mock a laugh. At least I got a bit warm with all that jiggling and wiggling.

We take the last few steps to the bus stop. The metal sign is bent, neon green scribbles cover part of it, and whatever was written on the other side faded away a long time ago. I'm actually a little surprised the pole is still standing, seeing as the gangs living in this area like to vandalize whatever they find.

I look up at the sky. It's an overcast day. Light grey clouds have created a fluffy blanket, holding back the warm sun rays. One cloud looks almost like a fuzzy, muscular man. Large chest, big arms, thick thighs. My shivering-cold dick gives a faint twitch at the memory of a certain man.

"What're you thinking about so hard over there?" Sully asks. When I don't reply, he insists, "A problem shared is a problem halved."

An icy gust of wind suddenly hits me, making me shudder.

"Nothing you need to worry about."

"Is it Dick?"

It usually is, but not this time. Still, my brother's concern for me always makes me feel guilty. Despite the fact that there's someone who gives a shit about me in this fucking unforgiving world, Sully should be having fun, not worrying about his dumb big brother.

The bus is approaching the curb. Still riding the feeling, I pull Sully into a brief hug. "I love you, you nerd."

He hugs me back, but soon shoves me in the gut half-heartedly as we move back.

“Weirdo,” he says.

After a pause, he relents, and looking at the slowing bus, he adds in a gruff voice, “I love you, bro.”

I smile at his back as he climbs inside. As soon as the doors close and the bus drives away, my head goes back to last night. To Hulk.

Since the first time I saw him in action, I’ve felt uncontrollable lust. He landed one single hook so potent the other fighter went down like a wall of bricks. But that wasn’t what enticed me so utterly.

It was the burning fire in his gaze just before the bell sounded. Then the way his eyes had turned empty, his expression blank. No anger, no fear. He became a machine, ready to dispatch his adversary. And yet, instead of doing that, he *let* the other fighter have a go at him. Taking some punches, ducking most of the rest. Hulk played with him. That kind of confidence in his own skills was so fucking hot. Just like watching all those rocky muscles and twenty-one-inch biceps flexing and bulging.

Drool-worthy sexy. He also has an energy almost simmering around him, waiting to be released. I try to think of an appropriate word for it but can’t find it. I thought I’d get a glimpse of it in his gaze but when he finally focused those molten chocolate eyes on me, they were flat, hard, unreadable. He looked about as approachable as a cactus. And fuck if that doesn’t awaken my bratty, naughty side.

I turn around and start my long walk toward the recycling plant.

I also like a dude with some hair. The dark curls covering Hulk’s head looked soft, but the ones peppering his pecs made my hands tingle. I also

noticed the hair in his pits as he reached up to rub the sweat off his body. I wanted to nuzzle my head there and inhale the musky scent of him.

My brother is right, I am a fucking weirdo. And a nutcase for salivating over the crazy beast who could definitely kill me with a punch.

I still can't believe I hit on him. I'm usually brazenly forward when I want someone. When my cock decides it wants to play, there's no stopping it. My success rate is pretty high in bars, not that I have that much experience. But propositioning a guy in that fighting circle? I must have been affected by temporary insanity. Sully is right, those people are dangerous. And I'm trying to get out of this criminal world, not get into it deeper. Not that sucking a cock would do that.

But I do feel a tad curious about him. Who wouldn't? He's sex on a stick, a mountain of stamina ready to let go on my ass. Just the thought makes all the blood go south, turning my dick into a throbbing mess. And the memory of the bulge in his pants, shit! The fabric barely contained the huge trunk pushing out from between his legs.

He called me boy, thinking I'm underage or something. I'm fucking twenty-three. My almost hairless body makes me look younger. It's a brothers' curse apparently. In hindsight, I could have phrased the BJ offer differently. But one glance at that bottomless stare and rugged appearance, and all my brain cells went on strike.

Thirty minutes later, I arrive at work. I used to have a bicycle, but it got stolen after a month. So, walking everywhere it is. I start my morning shift, feeling every aching movement in my bruised side. Loading fertilizer from the factory to the trucks isn't the most pleasant job. But for being an off-the-books gig, it pays good. And I need the money. Ned, my boss, is kind of an asshole and doesn't care about anyone and their excuses. He once fired a



guy for going to his mother's funeral instead of work. But as long as he gives me extra shifts, I'll come anytime he calls and without complaint.

Today, I have a double shift. After four consecutive hours, I'm sweating like a pig. I chug a bottle of water and wince when I take a whiff of myself. I bet Hulk would reject me even harder if he could see and smell me now. I, on the other hand, would sluttily welcome him all dirty. There's something about being fucked thoroughly by a big, sweaty guy...

A flash of his wide back marred with long thin scars appears in front of my eyes. They looked like whip lashes, and instead of horrifying me, they've made me feel closer to him in a way. Don't know his story, but that looks like physical abuse to me. My hand lifts to my chest, to the raised, discolored skin on my pecs.

"Break's finished!" Ned's voice suddenly booms from behind me. I wave at him and stuff the empty bottle back into my backpack.

Fucking hell, I couldn't stop thinking about the guy. This bit of curiosity is turning into a small crush. My next fight is in a week. The few days I have before seeing him again will surely fizzle out the odd interest. Nothing to worry about.



When I finally reach Dick's house at the end of the day, I'm exhausted. The sky has turned onyx black, and the shadows from the few street lamps are playing a creepy hide-and-seek game. The temperature has dropped from nose-stalactite frosty to dick-falling-off icy, thanks to the frigid wind blowing so roughly, I can feel it sneaking under my puffer jacket. I stop twenty feet from home—aka my hell on Earth. The small front lawn is littered with trash—mostly liquor bottles and beer cans. Darkness and snow hardly conceal the poor condition of the shack Dick calls his house. Cracked, falling paint, sinking, uneven steps, leaking roof, and drafts everywhere. The place needs improvements beyond cosmetic fixes and minor updates.

I hear the laughs coming through the open window facing the musty, smoky living room. Being careful not to be spotted, I see Dick scratching his old balls on the dirty armchair, his ever-present cigarette between his thin lips. On top of the plastic coffee table there're a few bottles of cheap whiskey, some pills, and lines of cocaine. A couple of shady guys are chatting on the sofa while a woman is lying on the floor, eyes closed, mouth open, drooling. Her cheap makeup is smeared all over her face. She's shirtless and probably high as a kite—that's how Dick likes them.

I should be horrified by the sight, but it has become so common over the years that I feel nothing, numb and anesthetized. The only thing I'm sensing is the urge to take Sully and leave and never come back.

Dick is a low-rank mule. He sells drugs and pimps girls. I've seen so many like this one passing through our house and even tried to help a couple, but they are always too deep into drugs or too scared. They only ever got me into trouble—my hand reflexively lifts to lay over my chest again. The pain is gone from my body, but it's forever living in my head.

The lowlife scumbag is showing his yellow teeth while nudging the girl on the floor with a foot. She opens her dazed eyes and like on autopilot, crawls to him. When I see her fumbling with his pants, I turn away and round the house.

The room I share with my little brother is just around the corner. He left the window slightly open for me. Every time Dick has guests, Sully places a chair under the door handle to stop any unwanted visitor from getting inside. He's young and looks like a fucking angel. His soft appearance and sweet attitude attract too much attention. He wears big hoodies and baggy pants to attempt to hide himself. But still, some of those despicable fuckers leer at him.

Dick hasn't let them have their way with him because Sully is surprisingly good at pickpocketing—his innocent looks make him inculpable and trustworthy. And also because the scumbag knows I'd do anything to protect my brother. He's got me in the palm of his hand. Hence the illegal fighting and other stuff he's forced me to do that don't just skirt the boundaries of ethical conduct but step all over them.

But soon, I'll get us out of here. Far away. I'm saving almost half of the money I get from the recycle plant job, since Dick doesn't know about my extra shifts. If I can make a name for myself and get a final big win from the fights, instead of giving it to the scumbag, I'll take it and disappear. So *long, motherfucker!*

I climb the low windowsill and get inside the room as silently as possible. I quickly push down the glass, even though the lack of a heater makes the room cold as balls. A bucket is in the corner, half full of water dripping from a wet spot in the ceiling. Sully is asleep a few feet away on the old bare, stained mattress on the floor. I take off my backpack with the intention

of pulling out my phone charger, but I make the mistake of dropping it down into the ancient chair. The old metal chassis squeaks and continues to pop and groan. Sully whimpers in his sleep. I wait, but when after a few seconds nothing happens, I use my phone flashlight to cast a glow over the mattress.

His cheek is smooshed against his bicep, full lips parted as he softly snores. Only then do I see Pink's head peeking out from under the flimsy blanket. The cat's eyes glow in the light, giving her white fur an almost ghostly air. She has a scar across her head and one ear is half-gone. Sully found her on the street a couple of years back and took her in. He let me name her after my favorite pop singer because she reminds me of Pink with her ballsy attitude and distinctive raspy *meow*. As if on cue, she lets out a long, gruff, drawn-out meow, making my brother jerk awake, the knife I gave him ready in his hand.

"It's me," I quickly assure him. He releases a loud, relieved sigh and drops his head and arm back on the mattress, making Pink sniff with outrage at being jolted. The knife's blade is too close to his belly for comfort, so I grab it and place it on the floor a couple of feet away from his head. Close enough to grab, but far enough not to accidentally cut himself.

"What time is it?" His voice is hoarse with sleep.

"Late. Go back to sleep," I tell him as I consider taking off my puffer jacket but change my mind.

I tug on my hoodie, wishing I could take a shower, but I don't trust letting myself be vulnerable in the bathroom with those people inside the house—I had a few close calls in the past. I'll do it in the morning. It's not the first time, but I still cringe at the thought of going to sleep all dirty.

I plug in my phone and set the alarm for tomorrow and then start pulling off my shoes. Sully pats the blanket till he finds the earphone he dropped when he woke up. We always sleep listening to music, it covers the loud laughter and disgusting noises coming from the living room.

Placing my bottle of water near the mattress, I lie down on the small space Sully left for me. He shifts half of the thin blanket on top of me, which reminds me that I need to buy a new one. We exchange some warmth by sleeping so close to each other, but a heavier blanket is essential in this cold.

We are on our sides facing each other, sandwiching Pink between us.

“How was work?” Sully asks softly.

“Long.”

“I can definitely smell the hours on you,” he says teasingly.

“Sorry.”

“For not wanting one of those creeps to jump you in the shower? Or for working like a mule to give me a better future?” He’s using his scowling tone.

I bump his shoulder with mine, which is kind of awkward to do in this position. But I manage, slightly crushing Pink in the process. She once again sniffs.

“Have you got everything for the trip?”

“Yeah. I’ll share a room with Brad, and he’ll lend me the rest, no worries.” I can hear the smile in his voice. Sully’s going on a school trip tomorrow. I haven’t seen him this excited since he was accepted into this school a year ago. And I’m actually relieved he’ll be away and safe for almost three weeks.

My vision is now used to the dark room, and I can see his eyes are closed.

“Good night.”

“Night,” he mumbles, pushing his cheek more firmly on his arm. I lift the earphone from the mattress, trying not to pull on the cord. “Can’t Be Loved” by Elle King makes my eyes roll. Sully loves sappy country music, but I have to admit this singer is pretty cool. Her raspy, sexy voice erases everything else as I sink into the soulful beat.

My errant thoughts turn silent, and I finally fall asleep.

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## Chapter 3

### *RAGUEL*

A week has passed, and we still have nothing on Lenny. Rami did a more thorough background check on him, from which we discovered that extortion and stabbing people in the back are his favorite hobbies—on top of the fighting business, which he keeps going with the help of a couple of corrupt cops.

Uri and Rami followed him this last week, and apart from a couple of meetings with neighboring smalltime thugs, he didn't do much. If I didn't see the motherfucker in person, I'd say we have the wrong guy. But no, his dead eyes and devious smile surely make him guilty. If he's not responsible for the teens' deaths, then he at least has knowledge of it. Which in a way, is equally cruel. I'm so looking forward to turning him into a donor and having my fun with him.

My fight is about to start, and fuck if I'm not glad about it. This weekend I've been feeling...edgy. A client hasn't been happy with one of my



employee's work and whined about it for nearly thirty minutes over the phone; Margery got a cold and took two days off, leaving me in utter chaos at the office; and I couldn't stop thinking about those damn mischievous, water-green eyes.

Oliver Truman's eyes. He's twenty-three—thank fuck—and lives in West Garfield Park with his father and brother. Barely finished high school. He has a cash-in-hand job. He was once almost arrested for assaulting a guy who bullied his younger brother. He isn't on any social networks, which says a lot about him since that's all people do nowadays. Hardly has a digital footprint. That's why Rami couldn't find much. We don't know how he started taking part in the illegal fights, but the violent city area where he comes from could easily be the answer.

Knowing more about him didn't assuage my uneasiness, though. I vented some of the tension when I fucked the sex worker from the escort agency a couple days ago, but it wasn't enough, nor as satisfying as usual. The guy was too muscular, too compliant, too silent, which is exactly what I asked for. What I usually want. What I always wanted in the past.

The dissatisfaction and restlessness rolling inside of me haven't allowed me to sleep much, and when I did, I had tormented dreams about my years of imprisonment. That's where my current biting-off-heads craving comes from.

"Fuck, you're tense. You okay?" Rami's voice takes me back to the fighting ring. There's a smattering of blood on the dirty ground from the previous fight and the air feels heavy, unbreathable. The number of people watching and cheering behind the small wall has grown. And with it, the body odors. Mix that with the wet rot from somewhere inside the factory, and I wish I'd

asked Michael for some of that menthol cream he rubs under his nose to dispel the smell of decaying bodies he deals with as a medical examiner.

A piercing pain hits my head. *Dammit! Not now.*

“Hey?” my brother shouts, and the pain disappears. *Fuck!* After I give him a grunt, he snorts. “Try not to kill the poor fucker. But in case you do, know that his wife has been hospitalized for the third time this month for being very...*clumsy.*”

An abusive husband to work out my frustration. Lady Karma is smiling at me today. I’m going to savor every single punch.

“Lenny is here. Do your worst!”

I nod in reply and wave at the vodka bottle in Rami’s hand. He pours some directly into my mouth. The taste is worse than last time. Where the fuck does he buy it?

When I hear the ding, it’s harder to put on the usual coldness. So, I move. I throw a couple of light jabs, right and left, connecting my knuckles with his cheek and side. He stumbles back and shakes his head but seems to regain alertness quickly.

Should have punched him harder. But it’s fine. It only means I can hit him more.

He comes at me with a left hook. I bob and weave, avoiding it, and counterattack with a powerful rear hook—but I don’t put all my strength into it...yet. My opponent’s head snaps back, and he wobbles, his fists quivering in front of him.

*Not so tough when you’re the one bleeding, motherfucker.*

I’m almost smirking at his split lip when in my peripheral vision, among the people chanting my fighting name, I catch a hint of green. My eyes snap back to it and are met with an appreciative, crooked smile. His wavy hair is

pulled back in a ponytail, and he's still wearing the same pink tank top and a purple hoodie. The last few days I've tried to remember the exact shape of his lips, and now that he's again in front of me, I stare the shit out of their perfect, curving lines to imprint them in my brain.

Oliver's gaze turns intense when he sees me looking at him. It slides down my bare chest and dirty jeans before coming up to my face again, filled with heat. A small line suddenly appears between his brows just as his eyes flicker to my left and I get slugged in the jaw. The taste of blood invades my mouth, and this time, I smirk at the familiarity of it.

Another punch comes flying from below, but I halt its trajectory by wrapping my hand around it. My fingers curl firmly around my opponent's smaller fist, and I squeeze. He grits his teeth against the pain. His dumb attempts at pulling his trapped hand free are futile. When it finally hits him, the unlikelihood of freeing himself, he attempts to hit me with his other fist. Anticipating his move, I grab his wrist and roughly yank his arm behind his back, twisting it till I hear a popping sound from his dislocated shoulder.

He screams this time, and I deeply enjoy the fear and pain filling his eyes. The crowd goes wild, some inciting me to kill him, others to tear his arm off. Not bad ideas. But I have something better in mind, something that will make Lenny—who's watching like a hawk—let us join his gym.

I tighten my hand around his fist and keep going until I hear a bone crack and then another and another. His knees are shaking badly and his body is jerking. His expression has morphed into an open-mouthed, agonized grimace. Tears are falling down his sweaty, reddish face while I continue breaking his bones.

"Touch her again, and I'll crush the other one," I whisper menacingly, looking straight into his bug eyes. It doesn't look like he's heard me, so I

tug his broken hand while wrenching his arm back, almost sighing in pleasure at his distressed cry.

He nods frantically and starts pathetically sobbing when I eventually let go of him. Feeling not yet satisfied, I grab his throat and headbutt him—hard. I watch his eyes roll back into his head just before his unconscious body drops heavily to the ground.

The screams and cheers are thunderous while I try to rein in the violence inside of me. My fists clench and unclench. My nostrils flare as I inhale deeply. I feel the blood pumping fast through my veins, my skin hot.

I lift my eyes to Rami. He's not smiling or cheering. Because my brother can easily see in my trembling body and murderous gaze that I need some alone time to calm down. He tilts his chin toward the bathroom, and only moves to reach Lenny after I nod at him in reassurance.

My gaze searches for Oliver, but I can't find him among all the people. Getting punched during the fight was enough proof that he's a distraction I cannot indulge in. Still, I give one last cursory glance.

When I walk through the crowd this time, no one attempts to touch me, which is a good thing. The anger inside of me is hardly placated, and I don't want anyone poking at it.

The sound of my heavy footsteps creates an echo in the deserted corridor, while the anger in the pit of my stomach keeps silently rolling and twisting. The light pain is back inside my head. Fuck! I thought I shook it off.

I need just a few minutes by myself and everything will be set to rights again. But when I enter, the bathroom is not as empty as I expected.

"We should stop meeting like this," Oliver says, that crooked smile tilting his lips. But his eyes don't have the same mirth as last time. They are studying me with a smidge of curiosity in them.

I force myself to ignore him and keep walking, halting when I reach my duffle bag.

Unfortunately, he doesn't take the hint. "You look edgy, Hulk."

I grunt noncommittally. I'm not edgy, I'm fucking furious, and I need a moment alone to fucking destress. I grip the edges of my open bag tightly, looking at the contents unseeingly, too focused on trying to control myself. To push away the pain and ease the anger.

"I can help with that, you know?" I freeze. Oliver's delivery is smooth, nonchalant, like he didn't just witness me crushing a man's hand, dislocating his shoulder, and knocking him out.

I turn toward him with the intention of shooting him down again, but my eyes fall on his smirking lips. The absence of fear in him is like an aphrodisiac. My cock starts filling inside my briefs at the thought of his hot mouth impossibly stretched around it. The violent feeling inside of me craves an instant outlet, but it can't be him. My roughness will certainly scare him.

"I thought your offer wasn't going to stand this time," I remind him of his words.

He shrugs and takes a couple of steps toward me. I can smell honey on him with a strong earthy undertone. It makes me growl. Christ, it's delicious.

"Sounds like you need it." He bites his lower lip in a flirtatious move, and I have to force my body to remain still. I'm fucking trying to resist because he has no idea what he's getting himself into.

"We can skip all the talking," he almost purrs. He reminds me of a cat. A sexy kitty who can easily turn into a skittish, yowling one, ready to swat his clawed paw.

“You’re playing with fucking fire.” I grit my teeth, almost wincing at the cracking sound.

“I like it when it burns,” he says in his sultry tone and looks at the growing bulge inside my jeans. “Your cock is clearly asking me to stay.”

Damn it! “My cock doesn’t ask. It uses and takes...forcibly. And right now, I’m not in the right state of mind.” *I never really am.*

His lips part and then his tongue comes out to slick them. His beautiful green eyes dilate, and the dark ring around his irises grows larger, making his entire gaze darken with lust. My words, instead of making him flee, are turning him on. Doesn’t he have any self-preservation? A cat in fucking heat. That’s what he is.

“Okay.”

*Okay?*

He suddenly shortens the distance between us and then falls on his knees at my feet, leaving me speechless. His hands very slowly lift, palms up like he’s dealing with a wild animal, which is not that far from the truth. He unbuttons and pulls my pants down to my knees, giving me ample time to stop him, which I don’t.

He gasps a short “Fuck.” Heated eyes zero in on my hard cock tenting the cotton briefs. I can see the pink head peeking out of the waistband, pushing against the elastic. I’m hung like a horse, long and thick, and that’s another reason why I use escorts. Because most people cannot take my enormous size or simply don’t want to.

Oliver doesn’t seem scared by it. Quite the opposite, actually. He looks hypnotized.

I’m looming over him in this position—more than usual, since I have at least twelve inches on him. I take in every piece of him, from the bottom of

his scuffed black sneakers to his long legs, the purple hoodie, which has slid to the side, displaying the golden skin of his shoulder. His desire-stricken eyes. The lust for me is clear in the hitch of his breath and the blush on his cheeks.

Why should I keep pushing him away when we both want this badly?

I'm so close to him, I feel the urge to touch a lock of stray hair that has fallen on his cheek. But I don't do that. I never do that. Because fucking isn't an intimate experience. It's a way to release the extra energy, stress, anger, and pain while feeling so damn good.

"No touching," I tell him. "Hands behind your back." His eyes narrow with caution when he lifts them up to my face—I don't like to see it, not on him—but he quickly follows my order. And the small action has my dick hardening painfully.

My hand hesitates on my briefs for a second while I'm reminding myself he isn't one of the sex workers I usually fuck. He hasn't been briefed and warned beforehand about what I want and expect. The fight inside me is raging, but the need to vent is going to win very soon if he remains here with me.

I've growled menacingly at the very few stupid people who've hit on me in the past, never tempted by any of them. This raw attraction toward Oliver is so damn overwhelming.

His cheeks turn redder, and as if he can read my mind he tells me, "You can be rough. I like it." His damn words have precum forming on the tip of my dick.

"You want to choke on my cock? I'll fuck your face until you're gagging," I snarl, my anger is now aimed at him for how easily he can turn me on.

He gulps. “Can’t wait to taste you. To feel your cock on my tongue,” he breathes out.

*Fuuuuck.*

His eyes narrow even further, full of challenge, and then he tilts his head back and opens his mouth. My body abruptly takes control. I yank my briefs down under my balls, grab a fistful of his thick hair, and without giving him time to glance at my cock, I push it into his hot mouth.

Hot damn! He closes his lips around me and sucks me in a warm, slick, tight vise. Yesssss. Because of my size, it usually takes a few tries to get me in. Not with Oliver. When his wet heat envelopes me smoothly, I can’t help but groan out my lust.

“Jesus Christ!” I run my hand deeper into his hair to grab him more firmly before I push all ten inches down his throat. I keep going until his nose is pressed against my lower abs. I hold him impaled on my cock. When his throat convulses around me and he makes guttural choking sounds, I wait a couple of seconds before pulling all the way out. He gasps for air, and I slap the precum-soaked tip against his tongue for a taste before sliding my whole cock back in. The feel of my dick filling his throat is orgasm inducing, but I refuse to come so prematurely.

I’m mesmerized by him. His incredible eyes look dazed. Tears are rolling down his cheeks and saliva covers his chin. His mouth is stretched and stuffed with my dick. I’ve never seen something so *mine* in my entire life.

I use his hair to hold him still, and then I simply let go, unleashing myself on his mouth, pistoning back and forth.

“I warned you,” I croaked. “Now be a good boy and keep milking my big cock. Take it. Take it.”



He moans and continues sucking. He wants to be used, that's my conclusion—or excuse. I don't care anymore. The only thing that matters is the pleasure I'm feeling.

The sound of hard cock rutting and a slurping, wet hole ricochet on the bathroom walls. The white wraps on my fingers have blood stains on them, and the stark sight of them among his black strands turns me even more animalistic.

Taking advantage of my tight grip, I bob his head while I thrust into his mouth like I would with his tight ass.

I'm giving Oliver everything. And he takes it all. He whimpers and gags so beautifully. My hand moves from his hair to his neck, wrapping around it. I rest my thumb on his throat, grunting at the feel of my cock sliding roughly inside it.

I continue slamming it mercilessly over and over, utterly lost in the pleasure, until I feel his sudden deep groan. It's muffled by my dick stuffing his mouth, and the long vibration sends me over the edge. I force my cock as deep as it will go, and my vision goes white as I come in thick, long spurts down his throat. I snarl hoarsely, thighs shaking while his tongue massages all the cum out.

I see a shudder racing down his body as he swallows my endless load. He's fucking draining my balls, and all I want is to give him more. To fill his whole stomach with my jizz. I wish I could see it rolling down his throat till it reaches his belly.

I widen my stance a little and adjust the angle of my jerking cock to get it just right, until it pumps cum directly on his tongue. He doesn't miss a drop and holds his abused mouth open. This guy is a natural at taking cock, and he clearly enjoys it.

When my dick stops shooting, he leans in and sucks the head, mining the slit with his tongue. So fucking thirsty for more. He lets out a satisfied moan and then kisses the tip with a smile. He looks high as he stares up at me, slowly straightening up and letting his arms drop to his sides again. There's a small wet spot on the front of his jeans, letting me know how much he enjoyed sucking me off.

He licks his lips and sinks his teeth into the lower one in a movement so hot, my spent dick gives a twitch.

I pull my pants up, and turning to my duffle bag, I grab a pack of wet wipes. After taking out a couple, I hand them to him.

"Thanks." He chuckles for some reason. His eyes are filled with mirth again, his voice raspy from the pounding I gave him, his lips puffy and red. Used by me. Strangely, the thought fills me with satisfaction. He slightly tugs on his pants and starts cleaning himself.

I quickly use the wipes on my chest and arms. Then I start to unwrap my hands; the right one aches a bit from the *enthusiastic* way I crushed the fighter's fist in the ring.

"Let me." Oliver doesn't give me a chance to decline his help. Within my next breath, he's in front of me, his head down, fingers lightly touching my hand while swiftly unwrapping it. It lasts less than a minute, and he touches me with mere clinical efficiency. But his sweet honey scent envelops me, and I can feel the warmth of his body this close. I haven't been the recipient of such a simple, altruistic gesture in a very long time. It slightly unsettles me.

When he's done, he hands me the wraps and smirks. "You look relaxed now. I'm *that* good."

I take a quick assessment of myself and find that he's right. I am relaxed. Sexual gratification always unwinds me, though this level of calmness is new. It's like all my bones have been immersed in a hot bath for hours. I can barely feel the muscle tension from the fight or the ache in my jaw. And my anger feels incredibly pacified; the pain is gone. I am utterly satisfied.

"You have a nice mouth on you," I say.

"Nice? What a flatterer," he quips sarcastically. "You almost choked me with the endless load of cum I dragged out of your cock. *Nice*, my stupendous ass." He slaps it lightly to drive home his point. My eyes can't stop from glancing at the round and incredibly fuckable jeans-clad butt.

"If I recall correctly, you moaned in bliss when I was choking you," I say, stroking my bristly stubble. I never talk about sex after doing it. I throw out the condom, tuck myself back into my pants and leave the motel room while sending the payment through my online banking. This is new, weird, and also kind of fun.

"Who wouldn't, tasting that humongous beauty?" He sounds shockingly honest.

I pull a tight black t-shirt down my chest, his eyes following the movement, like he can't help looking at me.

*Did he just call my cock a beauty?*

"Wait, Beauty—" he points at my dick "—and the Beast!" He waves his hand at my brawny body and lets out a hearty chuckle.

Is he...teasing me? Apart from my brothers, who know I'll never hurt them—much—no one else dares to do that. But Oliver's eyes show a glint of impish glee. His laughter is light and melodious in the dusty bathroom, it makes me want to share the amusement with him.

“Well, thanks for the laugh and the protein.” He rubs his belly, and I find myself snorting while staring at his mouth, recalling when it was hoovering my cum down his throat. Damn, that was hot.

I don a blue and black flannel shirt on top of the t-shirt. When I look at him again, he seems uncomfortable for a moment. His eyes dart away when he says, “Well, see you around.”

“Are you...okay?” I suddenly hear myself ask as he grabs his backpack and turns to leave. I’d been rough, perhaps too rough? Never cared before, but I need to know that he’s fine. Why? Don’t know. I just do.

He looks back at me, and the puzzlement is quite clear in his gaze, like my concern toward him is unexpected. And it fucking is.

“All good.” Before walking away, he gives me that crooked smile again. The one where two curved lines, like parallel brackets, form on one corner of his mouth.

There’s no way this is the one and only time I fuck that mouth. Despite the fact that I never go for the same guy twice, I need to feel this again.

The easy way he took all of me. How he enjoyed being face-fucked. How he responded to my simple commands, as if he was made to follow them. A thousand images flash through my mind, and in every one of them, he’s eager to do exactly as I order—ass in the air, on his knees, thighs spread, tied hands and feet.

I’m hooked on him already. The realization makes the hair rise on the back of my arms. I inhale deeply. This attraction is likely to become a complication when I should be a hundred percent focused on Lenny.

Although my head is crowded with conflicting thoughts, there’s a deep calmness to my steps when I go looking for Rami.



The next day, I'm driving down the long, jagged path that leads to Meg and Linda's house. The white frosted trees on each side create draped shadows along the snowy lane on this sunny day. I pull up at the tall gates, and through the open car window, I look straight at the small screen on the slate wall to let Serena scan my eye. The AI takes care of the house security, mainly because our base is here as well—which is where we *take care* of the donors, better known as the evil shitheads.

Rami offered to install Serena at my place too, but I went for a regular alarm system. I'm not really comfortable around *her* level of technology.

"Welcome, Rague," Serena's voice says from the speaker on the wall.

"Thank you," I reply, letting her check my voice as well. We can never be too cautious, doing what we do.

"Please enter."

I wait patiently for the gates to open and then drive the remaining distance to the garage, passing by the tall, white-columned house. Rami's Jaguar I-Pace is charging and Raph's Ducati is next to it. My other brothers, Gabe and Uri's cars are missing, though. If they don't hurry up, they'll end up being late. And Linda can turn quite prickly if we don't get to the family gatherings on time—or any other appointments we have with her. She

doesn't turn full-frontal angry but uses sneaky Machiavellian ways to get back at us, with a Cruella smile on her face.

I turn off the engine, and my mind wanders to Oliver and his mischievous smirk. I slept like a fucking baby last night. And this morning, I jerked off in my bed while thinking about him—more specifically, how he successfully sucked my brain out of my cock like he said he would.

Then I spent a good hour going through Oliver's background files. My curiosity has more to do with the wild attraction and the odd emotions he ignites in me, rather than the need to get more information on Lenny from him.

Oliver's father is a lowlife piece of shit. He went to prison twice for pimping and was arrested several times for dealing. He looks much older than his forty-seven years. But the continuous consumption of drugs and booze take a heavy toll on the body. We should keep an eye on him. Oliver's brother instead is a straight A student, he won a scholarship to a very good high school. He's much younger than Oliver, but Rami added some pictures where I can see them strolling on the street together, Oliver smiling happily. The mischief dancing in his eyes. *He's beautiful*. His brother is barely visible under the layers of clothes covering him.

The rumble of Gabe's GT snaps me out of my head. He parks next to me while I get out of my dusty pickup truck and walk toward him. My brother is a lawyer, a shark. He surely looks like one, always wearing his sharp, tailored suits, shiny leather shoes, and slicked-back hair. His ruthless, austere demeanor isn't an act. And although his cold-blooded and sadistic methods are very entertaining when aimed at one of the donors, he's not completely heartless. He cares about us, in his own way.

“Rague, tell me that barely concealed barrel on the bed of your pickup is not the one filled with acid.” His impassive voice has a bite to it.

I just grunt at him.

“I told you to get rid of it. If the police stop you, it could get tricky.”

“I own a demolition company,” I remind him.

“And you need a barrel of acid?”

I shrug. “It’s cheaper to buy in bulk.” I actually have two more at home. Acid is one of the best ways to get rid of a dead body. That and cremation. I’ve been thinking of building a cremator to help dispose of the corpses. Plus, I love fire. Such a clean, beautiful, and efficient way to eliminate the...unwanted.

I walk past the wall of tools that hides the secret entrance to the base, and open the door that connects to the house foyer. It always surprises me how the atmosphere changes from the laid-back, man-cave garage to the ostentatious decor of Meg’s family home. It’s all white marble, shiny columns, luxurious furnishings, and heavy ornaments. Most rooms on the first floor are closed. The sitting room, parlor, drawing room—they all look the same to me. We only used them when we were kids to play hide and seek. I remember Ferdinand, the butler, going crazy trying to find us.

“Who helped you yesterday?” I ask, heading to the dining room with Gabe walking next to me. It was my turn to assist with the discarding of the donor’s body—we have a rotation in place. Nobody likes this task because it can turn messy and lengthy, but I actually don’t mind it—there’s macabre beauty in watching a body dissolve into nothing. Yesterday was my turn, but since I had to be at the fighting ring, one of my brothers must have taken my place.

“Sari.”

My brows climb straight up my forehead in surprise. Sari is the youngest of us blood brothers—*blood* because we made a pact when we started this side business; we all have a scar on our hands as a reminder of the day we sliced our skin and mixed our blood. Even Sari, though he rarely comes in contact with the donors. He takes care of the other part of our side business. Being a genius—a naive and kind one who we all protect in one way or another, especially Uri—he works on the DNA samples we take from the donors and uses them to research and find cures and whatnot. That’s why we call the shitheads *donors* in the first place. Even though they are unwilling. But it’s ironic and poetically just to think that such evil individuals can actually do some good at the end of their useless lives.

“He was very methodical and precise,” Gabe adds. Of that I have no doubt. When Sari focuses on something, he gives one hundred percent of himself to it. But of all the brothers, he’s the only one who doesn’t need or enjoy torturing and killing. He’s satisfied with looking after the scientific part of the business.

When we enter the dining room, Linda is sitting at one head of the long table with Meg next to her, while Michael is on Raph’s lap, per usual, in deep conversation with Sari. Those two can talk for hours about unpronounceable medical stuff.

“Hey kids, come and sit,” Meg tells us with a soft smile on her face. I’m twenty-nine and Gabe is thirty, but our mother still calls us all kids.

I go around the table to give both Linda and Meg a quick shoulder squeeze, before taking a seat next to them. The fragrant smell of homemade baguette comes from the small basket on the table, and I take a slice and toss a piece into my mouth, enjoying the crunchy, buttery taste.



“Hey, guys,” Michael greets us as he feeds Raph some bread. Since they found each other a little more than four months back, they have been inseparable. Michael’s easily become part of this family, like he’s always been one of us. And in a way, he has. We discovered he was also kidnapped by the same scientists, but he doesn’t remember much of his time at the facility. And I hope for his sake that he never will.

“Oh, joy. C-3PO is here,” Rami says, coming through the swinging door on the left and bringing with him the delicious scent of food cooking in the kitchen.

Rami is annoyingly good at giving nicknames. Gabe does look like the stiff droid from *Star Wars*. And just to confirm my thought, Gabe gives Rami an emotionless blink and then turns to Linda to talk about work. Even though she’s a retired agent, she occasionally takes assignments. Lately, she’s been away less, but still asks for Gabe’s legal advice a lot.

Rami walks all the way to the other end of the table to sit next to Michael and Raph, surely to tease them. He’s wearing a tight green thermal shirt and black jeans with a chain hanging from his front to the back pocket. His reddish beard is getting pretty rough.

I rub the thick stubble on my chin and remind myself to shave it tomorrow morning. Does Oliver shave? His skin is very smooth. Is it as soft as it looks?

Uri’s long physique suddenly appears on the threshold of the door on the other side of the dining room. His dreads are framing his face and the metal piercings in his lip and eyebrow shine under the light coming from the floor-to-ceiling windows. He’s always the center of attention. His sociopathic ass doesn’t care what people think whatsoever, but his confident attitude and exotic traits surely attract people’s gazes.

“I’m starving,” he huffs out, pulling out the chair next to Sari before sitting. “Just in time.” Linda looks at her wristwatch with a disappointed look. She actually likes to unfold her wicked schemes, or as she calls them her *life lessons*. One of which ended with Rami owning three large turtles, and another with Uri’s Hummer filled to the brim with white chicken feathers. Don’t know how she comes up with that shit, but we rarely make the same mistake twice. Her life lessons are quickly learned.

The imperturbable Ferdinand comes in with the drinks. Rami keeps throwing small pieces of bread at Raph and Michael while they’re busy making out. Not one hits them. He’s a genius with a computer, but his aim is atrocious.

“Ramiel, stop wasting food!” Meg scolds him. She insists on always using our full names—which are a mouthful. When she found us as kids, broken and in pain, she decided to give us new names and chose the seven angels of wrath—Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, Ramiel, Uriel, Sariel, and Raguel. She told us that those seven angels were strong and made of pure light. After the darkness we were forced to live in, she hoped the new names would help us to start afresh.

“I couldn’t use the samples from yesterday’s donor,” Sari suddenly tells Gabe.

“Were the DNA samples not good?” Linda asks.

“They were contaminated.” Sari nods.

“He was a drug dealer, right?” Uri asks, laying his arm on the back of Sari’s chair.

Gabe replies, “Curtis Waters. His clients were mostly high school and college students. He didn’t care about cutting his product properly and sent twenty people to the hospital, eight died of overdose.”

“Fuck.” Don’t know who swore, but they took the angry word from my lips. “The police didn’t have enough evidence to arrest him,” Rami states. I don’t know how cops do it, following all those rules. Seeing bad people walk away. It must be so...fucking frustrating.

“Drug dealers like to sample the merchandise,” Raph says, rubbing Michael’s back. “Did you find high traces in his blood?”

“No,” Sari replies. “Drugs were not the problem. He had syphilis.”

Rami lets out a disgusted sound, dropping his bread very dramatically on his plate.

Linda snorts. “Figures.”

Ferdinand chooses that moment to bring two plates of grilled meat and steamed vegetables to the table. We all start eating, not the least bit bothered by the—what most people would call—*disturbing* talk. We all have cast-iron stomachs, too used to gory sights.

“How did you dispose of the body?” I ask Gabe, cutting through my rare steak. The knife sinks smoothly into the juicy, rare meat. For a moment, I imagine it’s Lenny’s flesh that I’m slowly slicing, seeping blood. *Soon*. I pierce the tender piece with my fork and stuff it into my mouth. Delicious. Before Gabe can answer my question, Michael interjects. “I read an article the other day about an alkaline hydrolysis machine.”

“Yes!” Sari yells with excitement. “It turns a body into liquid and bones.”

“Does it melt the skin?” Meg asks, showing her curiosity.

“Kind of, it’s a high-pressure chamber, potassium hydroxide is mixed with water and heated to three-hundred-and-two degrees.” Michael shares his enthusiasm, flicking his eyes to all the confused people sitting at the table.

“Babe, in layman’s terms,” Raph tells his boyfriend, but I can see the small proud smile tilting his lips.

Michael rolls his eyes. “The machine looks like a rectangular stainless steel box, as big as a van, with a touchscreen. The body enters through a circular steel door. A biochemical reaction takes place inside the chamber, and the flesh dissolves off the bones.”

“Like the shape-shifting robot in *Terminator 2*?” Uri asks.

Michael continues. “But in the course of about four hours, the strong alkaline base breaks down everything except the skeleton into the original components that built it: sugar, salt, peptides, and amino acids.”

“DNA unzips into its nucleobases—cytosine, guanine, adenine, thymine,” Sari adds, whatever that means. Michael and Meg are the only ones nodding in understanding.

“The body becomes a sterile, watery liquid that looks like tea. The liquid goes through a pipe into a holding tank, where it cools, reaching an acceptable pH and can be released down the drain,” Michael finishes with a big smile on his face.

“The human body, liquefied, smells like steamed clams, the article said.” Sari snorts.

“Really? Like seafood?” Uri sounds dubious. He tied his dreads back in a half-ponytail, reminding me of Oliver and the way I grabbed his locks while I fucked his face.

“What about the bones?” Gabe asks, fortunately taking my mind out of the gutter. A boner at the family table is just nasty.

“The air-dried bones are pulverized and can be scattered into a river or ocean where they will float and then disperse.”

“Pure calcium phosphate dissolves very slowly,” Sari states.

“We’d look like drug lords flushing their stash.” Rami huffs, making a wide gesture with his arms.

“Sounds...nerdy.” Linda scrunches her nose.

“And taxing.” Uri sniffs, the lazy fucker.

“And pricy,” Gabe says, after gulping a sip of water.

“A cremator is a faster and better idea,” I say.

“The pyromaniac claims.” Rami points at me.

“First, we get the mortuary cooler,” Raph declares. *Like the one Michael uses to keep the corpses at the hospital morgue?*

“What for?” Meg asks.

“Yeah, why? We need to get rid of the bodies, not keep them in the freezer waiting to invite a wandering cannibal for dinner,” Rami quips; the blue fingerless leather gloves on his hands look new.

“Torture.” It’s the only thing Raph says, making me frown.

“As in, freezing donors to death?” Meg asks without hiding her perplexity.

With a sigh, Michael decides to explain our brother’s psycho mindset.

“Raph thinks that waking up in a narrow, metal, coffin-looking place could create intense and overwhelming terror in the donors.”

“Mental torture.” Gabe’s voice is glacial. It silences any other question.

The air is filled with heavy tension as thick as fog. Michael is the only one with a confused expression on his face. Because he doesn’t know what Gabe suffered through when he was caged in the facility.

“It can be worse than physical torture, but not as entertaining, I can assure you,” he adds.

He exchanges a long, grave look with Raph. Then Raph nods, and Gabe clears his throat. He changes the topic, pointing at my bruised jaw. “How’s the clandestine fighting ring going?”

“Hulk here has quite the followers.” Rami’s teasing words lighten the atmosphere. He gives me that cheesy wink of his, making me wish I could

punch him right now. Unfortunately, he's sitting on the other side of the table, and Meg doesn't let us fight inside the house—not after Uri broke the window in the kitchen by throwing a chair at Raph when we were teens. On the other hand, Linda only commented, “Boys will be boys,” with a proud smile on her face.

Just like the beaming one she's aiming at me right now. “Of course, he has.” She pats my bicep.

“Hulk. Hulk. Hulk,” Rami starts chanting, joined by Uri, Sari, and Michael. I glare at them, and they quickly stop—it takes Rami a bit longer to shut his mouth.

“Next week, we're finally going to Lenny's gym. We need to get into his damn office one way or another and find some kind of evidence that he's responsible for the deaths of those boys,” Rami lets them know.

“Is Clover still out of the country?” Uri asks.

I nod at him.

“The thief? I want to meet him.” Michael frowns, earning a quick kiss from Raph. He's the only one who hasn't met him yet. But Clover is a slippery guy. He decides when and where, usually just turning up.

“What if there's nothing inside that office?” Gabe always likes to go through every possible outcome.

“There has to be something important. Don't know if it's related to those boys' deaths, but he set up two security systems at his gym. One for the whole place and the other solely for his office,” Rami explains.

“He bribes some cops for protection as well, ” Uri adds. Raph sniffs with disgust. He hates cops, even more so after one tried to kill Michael a few months back.

“Having two alarms is kind of suspicious,” Meg hums.

“Can’t you bypass them with your magic dancing fingers and Serena’s help?” Michael asks Rami, wiggling his hands in the air while Ferdinand goes around the table to gather the dirty plates.

“The wired security alarm is not connected to the internet. But I could try. I need to be near the control panel though, I can’t deactivate the sensors remotely. On top of that, he has two bodyguards near his office door during the day and one checking the monitoring screens connected to the cameras overnight.”

“You don’t want to spook the potential donor in case there’s nothing inside the office,” Uri states.

I grunt in agreement.

“He’s a very, very suspicious fuck. Don’t want him to slip between our fingers,” Rami hisses.

“You should wait for Clover to come back. He can get in and out undetected. No alarm system can stop that boy,” Meg advises.

“Not even the devil can stop him,” I hear Uri mumbling.

“Can I bring the cakes, ma’am?” Ferdinand asks my mother, but before Linda can reply, Raph interjects.

“No cake yet. I need Michael’s attention, and if there’s cake...”

“You don’t exist,” Rami finishes for him.

Raph grunts with irritation. The egomaniacal fucker. He’s obsessed with his boyfriend; I’ve never seen such a level of fixation before.

Oliver’s face pops into my head once again. The fearless kitty keeps sneaking into my thoughts.

“Get your undies out from between your psycho buns,” Uri teases.

“Not wearing any, sociopathic buttface.” Raph flips him off.

Several grunts rise from the table at the unwanted information. “What? It saves us time when Michael wants to fu—”

“Ahhhh! Stop talking.” Michael abruptly shifts on Raph’s lap to wrap an arm around his shoulder and push a hand over his mouth—thankfully shutting him up. “What the hell? We talked about this. No discussing our sex life with the family. Ah!” His hand jerks back. “You licked me! You’re such a barbarian asshole.”

Raph is smirking. “Piglet.” His voice sounds hoarse. “You know what that haughty voice does to me.”

“I can feel it.” Michael wiggles on Raph’s lap.

“And I’ve seen enough,” Rami mumbles

“That sweet ass needs some spanking,” my brother continues.

“And I’ve also heard enough. Somebody kill me,” Rami whines, looking skyward.

“Too easy,” Gabe mutters.

“Promises of sex and death. This is the right moment,” Raph states cryptically and then slides a small squared black box on the table next to Michael’s hand. His eyes widen and his fingers stop just a breath from the velvety box.

“What’s happening?” Linda asks, her voice trembling. Meg’s hands are clasped over her chest.

*Does that box contain what I think it does?*

“I think our psycho brother is about to lose his balls,” Uri states drily.

Gabe shakes his head. “That’s too mundane for our foster bro. There’s probably an ear in there.”

“A human one?” Sari asks.



Linda tsks, joining the conversation. “The box is too small to hold an ear. Maybe a phalange.”

“A galago’s ear would fit in there,” Rami sniffs back at her. The only thing he watches these days are documentaries about odd animals.

“A gala-what?” Uri asks, but everybody ignores him.

“A vile of blood would be more Raph’s style.” I lift a brow at Michael, and he blushes but agrees with me with a single nod.

“That’s so romantic,” Sari sighs.

“Is it?” Uri frowns at him.

“All of you fuckfaces shut the hell up,” Raph snarls.

Rami waves his hand toward him, unalarmed by Raph’s murderous glare.

“And the psycho award goes to...”

“Isn’t this supposed to be a romantic moment?” Michael cuts him off, turning to Raph. “Unless I grandly misread the whole thing and your brothers are right about...”

“We are not romantic. Never were,” Raph states matter-of-factly.

“True.” The smile Michael aims at him is dripping with love.

And I find myself wondering what it would feel like to let someone see me. The real me, down to the darkest bits. To open up so completely, willingly letting down all my defenses, and stand there naked.

I’ve never let myself contemplate the possibility of finding someone to share my life with, for too many fucking obvious reasons. The discovery of my family’s bloody business being a small one compared to the fact that I’m a fucking ticking time bomb ready to explode and destroy everything in my path.

“Michael, you are mine.” Raph’s steady words suddenly resound in the silent dining room. And I force myself to let go of those time-wasting

thoughts and concentrate on what's happening.

"You have been since the first moment I saw you. These last few months spent with you have consolidated and tightened the strong ties that hold us together."

"Ties...kinky," Rami mumbles, getting a slap behind the head from Michael.

"I want to fuck you, only you, and often, every single day." A small happy laugh leaves Michael's trembling lips. "I want to be with you, in you, always. Breath to breath. Eye to eye. Skin to skin. You will marry me and belong to me forever, Michael Caldwell."

I snort. It sounds more like an order than a proposal. "Shouldn't you ask him, Raph?"

"And give him the choice to say no?" Uri chuckles derisively.

"Are you fucking deaf?" Raph addresses us without taking his eyes off his boyfriend. "Michael is mine already. This is only to tell all the fuckers out there that if they try to touch what's mine, they'll end up missing one or both hands...if they're lucky. Huh, babe?"

Raph's possessive and brutal statement doesn't scare Michael in the least. On the contrary, he looks like he's about to melt on his lap.

"All that I am is already yours, but I'll marry you, you caveman."

Raph's slow smile is kind of terrifying. He yanks Michael's head forward for a quick but very dirty kiss, and then opens the black box and slides a white gold band with a row of rubies on Michael's finger. I get a quick glimpse of Michael's watery blue eyes before he attacks Raph's mouth.

"That was a very unique love declaration." Gabe sounds bored, but there's a hint of a smile on his face.

Sari is not trying to hide his beaming one. Tears of joy are falling down his cheeks while Uri is staring at him with an unreadable emotion on his face. Meg and Linda are cheering. They stand and go to hug the happy couple while the rest of us remain seated. We aren't really the touchy-feely kind. Apart from Sari, who's talking excitedly with Michael and admiring the unusual engagement ring.

I can't keep my eyes off of them. Michael and Raph look so complete together. Amid the unfair and puzzling chaos of life, and after all they went through, they've found one another. I don't know what I'm feeling exactly. I'm thrilled for them, but I'm also even more aware of the huge void inside of me. Is it loneliness? Can I still feel lonely while I'm surrounded by my noisy, larger-than-life family?

Rami's gagging sound yanks my attention to him. "I need to throw up, but my stomach doesn't have enough substance. Can I have a stick of bread with a sprinkle of arsenic? A glass of pesticide? Shards of glass would work, as well," he grumbles.

"Stop being such a baby raccoon, and be happy for your brothers!" Linda scolds him.

"Can we keep the sickening kisses to a bare minimum at the table, though?"

Uri huffs, pulling Sari down on the chair next to him again. Michael and Raph don't seem to hear him and keep going at it.

"Just do a Yentl, and pretend it never happened," Gabe suggests while tapping quickly on his phone.

"A what?" Sari asks, looking all cute and confused. His pale blue eyes are framed by grey squared glasses, and his black hair is long past his shoulders now, tied in a braid. At times, his delicate features and graceful movements make him look very feminine.

Ferdinand arrives, pushing a cart with several cakes on it. Meg passed her sweet tooth on to us. Many of my childhood memories involve us sitting around this table eating pies.

“Great! Thank you, Ferd...” Meg’s sentence breaks into a coughing fit that makes Michael rapidly jump off Raph’s lap and move around the table to reach her, slapping her back lightly. Gabe tells Ferdinand to bring some tea with honey, and I pour fresh water in her glass. Linda hands Meg the glass; her gaze is on her wife, looking as deeply worried as the rest of us.

Meg has lupus, a condition that makes her immune system attack its own tissue. The attacks can be widespread, affecting not only skin but also blood, cells, and organs. It needs to be monitored regularly. And although she’s reassured us that her condition hasn’t worsened, she doesn’t look like herself.

“I’m fine.” Meg’s voice sounds raspy. She drinks some water and reassuringly squeezes Linda’s hand on the table while looking at her.

“Did you see Dr. Sallinger recently?” Michael asks, walking back to Raph. Dr. Sallinger is an immune pathologist at the Grand View, the same hospital where Michael works.

“I did. It’s just this cold weather that dries out my throat,” Meg explains. When Ferdinand places the cup of hot tea infusion on the table, she smiles up at him. “Please, we need to celebrate.”

When nobody moves, she adds, “Two of my kids just got engaged, stop the long faces and show me some smiles.”

Ferdinand is the first to act, placing the desserts on the table. Even though still concerned about Meg, nobody can resist good cakes. Sari and Linda start handing chocolate and apple-nut slices topped with whipped cream around the table.

I hum around a forkful of double chocolate cake while I stare at Meg sipping some of her tea. She's serenely listening to Linda, Michael, and Sari talk about wedding stuff.

Am I worrying for nothing? I can't turn it off. I owe my mothers and my brothers everything. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for this family—or maybe I would but in a very twisted, screwed up way. I'd do anything for them. Anything—we are past the where-should-I-bury-the-body favor, obviously, but everything else is game.

“What's with you? Your lemon-sucking frown usually gives way to a teeny-tiny smile when there's cake involved.” Rami is studying me, leaning forward from the other side of the table. He's the only one not eating.

I grunt, hoping it's enough of a response for my brother. He's used to my lack of communication skills. Not that I don't know how to express myself, but I don't need to interject my opinion into every conversation. Growing up, my mouth landed me in trouble with my addict mother and then later with the sick scientists who experimented on me. I learned fast that it was better to keep quiet and let people think I'm the silent type. Which is ironic, given that I'm a swirling vortex of furious energy. I just learned to control it and hide it most of the time, channel it into fucking and killing.

“Is your broodiness perhaps caused by a certain fearless, sexy twunk with red lips and a sassy attitude?”

“No.” My quick and too-loud denial attracts Uri and Gabe's attention. But I really wasn't thinking about Oliver...not this time.

“Uh-huh.” Rami clearly sees through my agitated answer, continuing to stare at me, probably hoping the weight of his eyes will make me crack. I won't say a word, though. Don't want to share what I did with them. I fucked Oliver's mouth, and I can't stop wanting it again.

Rami's hazel gaze is starting to itch at my skin, but I ignore it.

Uri shifts in his seat. "I can get you inside Madame Claudette's if you need some *relaxing* time." That's the BDSM club Uri likes to go to.

"Not my scene. I can get what I need from the escort agency," I reply gruffly. But do I?

I certainly did when Oliver took my cock like a champ. The feel of his hair between my fingers, the way his throat squeezed me, the moans that left his lips, the challenge and want in his beautiful eyes. Perfection.

His careless attitude and the fact that he refused to back down had my blood boiling and my instincts screaming to take what I wanted from him. And I did.

"You do? Because I have more information on the sassy twunk," Rami very casually lets me know.

"Who?" Gabe asks.

"Rague's new admirer," Rami singsongs, making me groan with annoyance. Uri's brows kick up. "He must be on a suicide quest if he tried to talk to you."

"Oh, they talked alright." Rami's Cheshire Cat smile rubs me the wrong way.

"You should use him to get information," Gabe says in his businesslike voice, his attention once again on his phone.

"Good idea. And try not to kill him," Uri adds.

Rami hooks his hands behind his head, pushing out his impressively muscled chest. "A few *petite morts* wouldn't hurt though, bro."

Fucker! I rack my brain for a lippy reply, cursing when I come up empty. So, I just flip him off. He blows a kiss at me and whispers, "Check your

email; we might have something on Lenny and it involves your admirer's father."

*Fuck.*

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## Chapter 4

### *OLIVER*

Having to work a half-day means less money, but it also means I can have lunch with Lori. My best friend is the king of the twink. Petite, feminine, and triple-sassy. His eloquent brown curls frame his delicate face with big, dark blue eyes and a heart-shaped, shiny mouth. With a long, pale neck and a slender chest, he's almost as lean as my brother, but more compact.

He lives and breathes vintage fashion and has a knack for finding and matching garments. He introduced me to thrift shops and used markets. He can be very bold with his choices. Today, he's wearing a turquoise cable knit sweater, red faux leather pants, and black ankle boots, which he paired with glittery blue nail polish.

"Do you have to eat that greasy monstrosity in here?" He's eyeing my cheap fast-food double cheeseburger with a disgusted scrunched-up nose. I open my mouth wide and sink my teeth into the sandwich, moaning like a porn star on Viagra, just to fuck with him.

He snorts. “How long has it been since you had something that big in your mouth, mate?” Lori’s grandma who raised him is from Manchester, UK. That’s why he sometimes sneaks British words into his Chicago accent. Most people find it bizarre or fabricated, but Lori just carelessly shrugs and raises his middle finger. Life hasn’t been easy on him, but he isn’t bitter, nor is he a happy-go-lucky kind of fella. He’s tough as nails and snarky as hell. “Actually, I had a very delicious snack the other day. It filled my belly juuuust right,” I tell him while obnoxiously chewing my food with my mouth open.

He stops ruminating over his ginormous homemade salad. “And why am I just now hearing this?”

I hum noncommittally and then toss a couple of fries in my mouth. The movement makes my belly ache. I took a hard punch yesterday during the fight. I won, but my adversary made me sweat. They are getting bigger and stronger the more matches I accept.

“Okay, putting my horny glasses on. Oh, what am I saying? I never take them off.” He half-laughs before telling me to spill the beans.

“Not much to say.” I continue to stuff my mouth. I don’t know why, but I feel kind of reluctant to talk about Hulk.

“That bad, ah? Did he drain the spaghetti prematurely? Tried to stuff the meatballs as well? Tasted like rotten cheese?”

I almost choke on my Coke, and while coughing, he pats my back. “For fuck’s sake, Lori. I’d like to eat pasta again.”

“Ollie, why are you being so weird?” He lets out his annoyed huff, pointing his upturned nose to the sky.

“Weird like what?” I’m trying to stall here, but it’s as pointless as the P in the psycho TV series Lori likes to watch. He’s known me since we were

kids. We grew up together and both came out to each other around the same age. We even tried to hook up once in school—it felt natural since we were best friends and being queer wasn't something you declared to the closed-minded folks living in our neighborhood. Dick surely doesn't know about my tastes. There are still only a few openly gay people around these parts, because words like fag, sissy, and homo are used like glitter in a gay disco club.

Anyway, Lori and I kissed, and...it was terrible. Like kissing my own brother. Yuck.

“Didn't know there was a range of weirdness,” he says with a sniff. “But very well, you're acting like one of those fish swimming near a shark's ass. You think it's a good idea, but trying to hide behind a sphincter just makes you stinkier.”

“Fuck off, that doesn't even make sense.”

He scratches his chin with his middle finger, making me smile while I sniff with exasperation.

That's when I see him. Hulk. Coming out of a small hardware store. I blink a couple of times, but it's really fucking him.

My spine straightens as my eyes focus on him. There's something about the way he moves that draws my eyes to him like a magnet. His swagger is cool and confident, so commanding, you know he's the real deal. Exuding glacial, dangerous vibes. Supremely attractive.

*I already established I'm fucked up.*

Apparently, in the last two days, I've forgotten how magnificent he is. It's freezing on the streets, but he's not wearing a jacket like he was the other night, only a dark green flannel shirt, the top buttons undone, offering a glimpse of the white Henley underneath. It stretches tightly over his huge

biceps and curvy pecs, ending just above his muscular ass, clad in worn black jeans. I know I'm ogling the red-hot beast, but it seems like that's my automatic bodily response to him.

Lori's high whistle makes me jump. "Hello, lumbersnack Daddy."

I follow the direction of his lusty eyes and abruptly let out a loud "No!" The sound of my hand crushing the empty burger wrapper resounds inside the car.

"Jesus! Are you trying to give me a heart attack?" He presses his hand on his chest and stares at me with his mouth wide open.

I swear under my breath. "He's off limits, Lori." Because fuck, I don't want my beautiful and lively best friend around him.

"Are you calling dibs?" he asks.

"Can't," I mumble.

"Oh, you don't think he's loud and proud on team dick?"

"He is."

Lori's gaze goes back to Hulk, who has stopped near a huge beat-up pickup, placing his shopping bags under the plastic sheet covering the bed of the truck.

"Even if he wasn't, I'd enjoy trying to turn him," he purrs.

"Lori, I know he likes dick!" I growl, wanting him to stop imagining being fucked by Hulk. I know he's doing it. Because that's what I've been doing since the first time I saw him fighting in the ring, all rugged and ripped.

"How the hell...? Hold the fuck on! You shagged *him*?" He sounds stunned.

"Hey, you don't think I could get him?" I ask, kind of offended by his surprised tone.

"I'm so bloody relieved. I thought I had to scatter your sex life ashes in Lake Michigan!" He closes his smooth hands on my face and makes his lips

quake in a fake tremble.

“Cut it out. I only blew him.” I shake his blue fingernails off my cheeks.

“His dick must be huge, if it’s proportionate to the massive rest of him. And your jaw still moves properly. You make Papa Lori very proud.” He pats my shoulder in a ridiculous, satisfied way.

But he’s right, Hulk’s cock is a monstrous beauty. I haven’t stopped dreaming about getting fucked by that gorgeous thing. Torn in two while sitting on it and feeling it punch all the way into my guts. God, that cock is gigantic perfection. The perfect shape. The perfect length. Perfect girth. It fits gorgeously in my mouth.

Lori closes his empty food container and places it on the back seat before angling his head toward Hulk again. “He’s a giant. He can look two-stories tall if I squint.”

I snort, jabbing his side with my elbow. Hulk gets inside his car, and I immediately miss the sight of his colossal figure. All of a sudden I’m assaulted by a strange foreboding apprehension of never seeing him again. Perhaps that’s why I abruptly yell, “Follow him!”

“What? You want me to follow the son of King Kong and that lovely young lady he got frisky with on top of the Empire State Building?” Lori’s high-pitched voice is dripping with incredulity and...excitement. *God help us all.* “Go!” I can’t believe I’m saying these words to the worst driver ever. I must be temporarily nuts.

He responds by snapping his head straight forward and zeroing his eyes in on the road. He pulls whatever the opposite of smoothly is into traffic, and then floors it down the boulevard—a big disturbing smile plastered on his face.

I can see Hulk's pickup roof, it's three cars ahead of us. Lori honks at a woman who's about to cross the street—on the marked crosswalk—making her jump back while he swears at her.

“For Christ's sake, why do you have to turn into the fast and the freaking furious the second you get behind a wheel?”

Lori huffs. “Stop bitching, Miss Daisy. Where did King Kong Jr. go?”

“There!” I point at the back of Hulk's vehicle disappearing around a corner.

I hold on to the oh-shit bar for dear life as Lori doesn't check his mirror or indicate he's switching lanes before making a hard turn. He then slams on the brakes right before his front bumper comes in contact with the car in front of us. I'm jolted sharply forward before the seatbelt yanks my body back, and I hit the seat hard. My aching body protests with a grunt.

The guy in the car in front of us pushes his head out of the window to scream at Lori. And rightfully so—even though his language is more colorful than needed.

“The idea is not to let him know we're tailing him,” I tell Lori between my gritted teeth, while he rolls down the car window just enough to slide his hand out, middle finger up and blue glittery polish shining under the sun. A gush of cold air enters the car, making me shiver. My puffer vest has a couple of holes in need of sewing.

Lori waves off my murderous glare while closing the window without even sparing me a glance. If he didn't have such a silver tongue that gets him out of traffic tickets, they'd have thrown away the key to his cell already.

He snaps his fingers. “We need a memento!” He grabs his phone from the cup holder next to the steering wheel and holds it up in selfie mode with the two of us in the frame. “Say crazy stalker.” *Click*.

The shrill *screeee* of the tire wheel scratching against the edge of the sidewalk sends us both jumping. I'm pretty sure the judge would give me a very light prison sentence if he knew what pushed me to strangle my best friend.

"We are in need of a soundtrack," Lori half-yells with fervor a moment later. "Siri dearie, stalker playlist, please."

"Stalker playlist? Seriously?" I groan.

He waggles his eyebrows at me.

"Stalker playlist playing," the cell phone's virtual assistant replies after a few seconds. *Really?*

The dark and punchy sound of an electric guitar suddenly fills the car. Blondie starts singing "One Way or Another," and I roll my eyes at the song. Lori, on the other hand, is nodding and humming along, enjoying how the car vibrates with every pulsing beat of the song.

I feel my eye ticking with annoyance. "Do you mind?"

"Not in the least, Edward."

"Edward?"

"I think it's Edward, or maybe Herbert." Lori is terrible at remembering names. "The sparkly vampire from that chick flick. He's fucking obsessed with a girl and even breaks into her house to watch her sleep. Would that be your next move by any chance?"

"I'm not obsessed!" I retort vehemently...too vehemently perhaps.

"Of course, you aren't" he says in a clearly patronizing voice. "Now let me concentrate on following—in a totally *healthy* way—the bloke you sucked off."

"I'd like to stuff all that sarcasm up your ass," I bark.

“I can take a lot up there—a *lot*. A couple of guys can testify to that. But my supply of sarcasm won’t fit. It’s endless.”

“Don’t I know it, and I’d still like to try.”

“Kinky!” He shakes his narrow shoulders in a fake tremble.

I ignore his moronic act and crane my neck to keep my eyes on the pickup while it drives ahead, leaving Greater Grand Crossing behind. It’s a miracle Hulk hasn’t spotted us.

“Keep some distance, don’t want him to catch on to us.”

Lori nods but doesn’t slow down. Thank fuck there’s a car between us and his pickup.

“This is exhilarating, mate.” Lori’s practically jumping in his seat. “We are like Tarzan and Cheeta.”

*If they were Jane’s stalkers.* Wait, they kind of do follow her around the jungle. But that’s cute and acceptable because it’s a children story. I snort.

“Who’s the stinky monkey?” I know the answer already.

He sends me a long *duh* glance before the car swerves dangerously to the right and he has to return his eyes to the street. *Fuck!* My hand shoots out and grabs on to the silver glove box as my knuckles turn white.

“I can’t be Cheeta with this luxurious hair.” He points at his perfectly styled curls. When I keep silent—too busy praying to God and all the angels to spare my life—he adds, “What? You think I’d be a better Jane? Because I agree. Look at my tight booty-licious.” He lifts his ass from the seat and leans to the left, pushing his *derrière* my way.

I quickly grab the wheel and yank it toward me before the car crashes into the guardrail. “Are you trying to kill us?”

“Sorry,” he mumbles.



We drive *silently* for a few more minutes on the freeway. Then Hulk exits and turns onto a back road. There are no cars left between us. The area looks residential, but the houses are placed far apart from each other.

Lori finally eases off the gas pedal and whistles while looking around. “This is where I’d like to live...if I was a serial killer.” He frowns thoughtfully. “It’s secluded enough so nobody can hear the screams, and there’re a lot of spots you can choose from.” Lori is quite passionate about murder and drama—that’s all he watches on TV. Knowing that, his creepy comments make more sense.

“To do what?”

“Bury the bodies.” Still, his line of macabre thoughts should be appalling, but he isn’t wrong. This is usually the kind of place where the police find human remains.

“We should take Micro Dick here for a stroll.” Lori smiles evilly at me. He hates Dick. He knows everything that fucker has been forcing Sully and me to do. Growing up, we went to Lori’s apartment whenever we could. His grandmother always welcomed us with a cup of tea and homemade butter biscuits. But Dick never let us be for long. And I didn’t want to get Lori or his grandma into trouble, so Sully and I had to go back to him.

Occasionally, Lori offers to help me take him out. And lately, the temptation to accept those offers is getting hard to resist. I should feel horrified by my own thoughts, but I know very well what Dick is capable of. The world will be a better place without him. Although, I don’t like the idea of taking a life—even though I’ve done other things I’m repulsed by—I’m afraid sooner or later, he’ll force my hand. The only thing that has been holding me back is Sully. Because if I go to prison for murder, he’ll end up in foster care, and

I don't want my little brother to become a character in one of those spine-chilling stories on the news.

When Hulk's pickup slows down and turns onto a small road, I tell Lori to halt the car. I can see a small house at the end of the road. It looks like a picturesque painting, lovely surrounded by shiny white snow. Very far from the serial killer's image.

Is this his home? It looks so ordinary, while he is...otherworldly. And if it is in fact his house, why did he come all the way to Greater Grand Crossing to go to a hardware store?

Radiohead's "Creep" starts playing just as Hulk gets out of the car. *Shit, I love this song!* He grabs the shopping bags from the car and stops. He turns his head and stares right in my direction. I know he's too far away to see me clearly, but I feel those intense black eyes drilling a hole in my head. So, I irrationality and very dumbly duck down.

"What the bloody hell are you doing now?" Lori is studying me with one brow up.

"He's looking at us. He could recognize me."

"I can barely see him from here." Lori leans over me, focusing his narrowed eyes out the window.

"Fuck!" This position is so fucking uncomfortable, I can't breathe, bent almost in half with my best friend on top of me. "This is ridiculous." I push him off me and straighten up, noticing that Hulk has disappeared inside the house.

"It was ridiculous ten minutes ago when we started tailing him, now it's just plain pitiful, *Fatal Attraction* five-alarm clinger cruising for a restraining order pitiful."

“Fuck off.” He just doesn’t get it, he’s never had a crush on someone. We’ve done crazy shit for guys in the past, but more on the revenge side—slashing tires, throwing spoiled eggs and tomatoes from a moving car, writing their names and phone numbers next to a list of sexual services on public bathroom stalls. This is in a whole other ballpark.

Just thinking about his big body and dark eyes, and those long scars on his back...I hate them and find them sexy at the same time. They tell me the tale of a very strong, persistent man. A survivor. A kindred spirit. I want to lick every one of them. Every cut and imperfection on his body. I want to feel the uneven skin under my fingers while he slams those ten inches roughly inside of me.

Fuck, my light crush might have turned into a full crush. And I need him to fuck it out of me. His dick has to be the cure.

“I have to go back to work. My lunch break ends in fifteen.” Lori’s words jerk me out of my head. He works in a paralegal office. “Unless you want to go all Batman on him and wander over to the other side where invasion of privacy lies.”

“Christ! No. Let’s just go,” I huff. My head and body are in a turmoil.

“Right-o.” The way he talks is so fucking ridiculous sometimes, I cannot stop a snort from escaping.

He turns on the engine and tries to make a U-turn but has to back up three times, bumping lightly against the trunk of a tree every single time before succeeding.

When we are back on the freeway, Lori sighs. “If I’m being truly honest here, I completely understand your *non*-obsession with King Kong Jr... I mean...*whooo*.” He fans his face with his hand. “Now, don’t think I forgot. I want to know everything.”

“About?” I feign ignorance, but he sees right through me and pinches my arm in retaliation.

“Ouch! What I just did was crazy. Certifiably crazy! Shouldn’t we talk about that?”

“What a load of rubbish! *We* did it. I was a willing and inciting participant in the certifiable action. And this is far from the first moronic thing we’ve done.” *Yeah, but it feels different somehow.*

“And, we always kiss and tell about our hookups. Especially spectacular ones.” He’s right again.

“How do you know it was spectacular?”

“If the stalking shoe fits.” He smirks at me.

“I hate you,” I whine. He replies with a series of noisy air kisses.

“Now out with it, you tosser!”

“Alright...” I start, while Sting’s creepy as hell “Every Breath You Take” plays in the background.



I fucking hate this. I spit a blob of red on the ground near the unmoving body of my opponent. The iron taste of blood clings to my tongue. The fucker got me on the side of my face, cutting the skin, while my canine

sliced my inner cheek. He had a fucking mean right hook, I almost blacked out. But I still won, thanks to my dirty moves and a lot of damn luck. My side screams with pain as I climb over the wall, leaving the fighting ring behind me. If I keep going like this my bruised ribs will never have the time to heal. I go straight to Jerry to get my cut, which will almost completely go into Dick's pocket. Anger boils inside my guts while people pat me on the back and scream in my ears. I ignore them all.

After grabbing the money, I head toward the bathroom to get my stuff. My hand presses on my ribs. It hurts like a bitch. I need to be more careful. My opponent tonight was much more skilled than me and bigger. What the fuck are Dick and Lenny playing at? When Lenny told me who my next opponent would be I snorted thinking he was taking the piss. Should have known better.

I reach the bathroom threshold, put my hand up on the doorframe and stop dead. Hulk is leaning against one of the stalls. His posture looks tense despite his big arms crossed in a relaxed pose. He's wide across his muscular chest and shoulders, tapering to a lean waist, all clad in a stretchy grey thermal shirt. My dick takes notice. He seems lost in his head, looking down at the floor, but straightens the moment he sees me. His hard dark eyes take me in, pausing on the bleeding cut on my face. The room feels considerably smaller and warmer with his imposing energy. But I don't feel threatened.

"Waiting for me?" He doesn't reply, and I wipe the blood off my cheek with my knuckle, and then cock my head to the side to study him more. Hulk's lips tighten under my scrutiny, and damn if that grumpy expression doesn't make him even sexier. A light stubble emphasizes his masculine jawline and makes that large mouth look more delicious than it has any right to be.

“If not for me, why are you here? You don’t have a fight tonight.”

“Keeping tabs on me?”

Why does it sound like he’s hinting at my stalking episode? I force my eyes off him and go to grab my backpack from under the bench.

“I heard you’re fighting against Scorpion next?”

“Did you hear that *after* you asked around about me?” I smile, pulling my hoodie out, feeling suddenly excited by the thought that I’m not the only one interested.

He only grunts. Not a very loquacious person. Unless he’s talking dirty, and damn, that’s hot.

“Scorpion?” He tries again.

I let out a long sigh. “Yeah, so?”

“It’s not a fair fight.”

I grind my teeth. Where is he going with this? “You’re right, I’ll squash him like the bug he is. ”I put on a fake smile.

“Scorpions are not bugs. They have eight legs, not six, and two body segments while insects have three.”

My mouth falls open at his bug knowledge. People rarely surprise me, after all I’ve seen and endured. But Hulk does, and that’s another thing to add to my crush. Fuck! I pull the purple hoodie on, hissing when I lift my arm and stretch my side.

He narrows his eyes, black gaze on my hurting ribs. “Don’t fight him.”

“Aww, are you worried about me? ”I pucker my lips in a teasing way, but his expression doesn’t change. His body stiffens and his hand flexes while his eyes fall to my mouth. I’d like to see him all riled up again, just like when he lost control while fucking my face. The way he took what he

wanted from me. That roar he let out while coming...my dick is plumping just from the memory of it.

But he ruins it with his next statement. "There's no point in an uneven fight."

"Right. Nice way to say I'm not good enough." I glare at him.

"Never thought you'd be the self-deprecating kind," he growls. And I never thought much about a man growling. His voice is a little rough, husky but strong. There's pure masculinity dripping from it that has me sweating with hunger and excitement and trepidation, and what a delightful fucking feeling that is. But his growl? It ignites a delicious, electrifying shudder from the tips of my toes to the one at the end of my dick. Everything in me wants to respond to it. But I push the feeling away, irritated when the meaning of his words register.

"Why are you here? Do you want to fuck?" The best defense is a bold offense.

His jaw ticks and his eyes don't waver from my face. But he doesn't give me an answer. Or maybe he just did.

I straighten my spine and zip my puffer vest on. "This is a waste of time. I'd rather go, Hulk."

"Rague," he says.

"What?" I frown at him while grabbing my backpack and pulling up the purple hood over my head.

"My name is Rague." I didn't know his real name until now, but I can still recall the taste and weight of his cock on my tongue. I got almost lost in the sensation of being fucked in the mouth by him.

"Rague, it fits you. I'm Ollie," I reply. I see his lips silently moving around my name. And I find it...cute.

“Right.” I clear my throat. “I’ll see you around, Hu...mmm Rague.” My words sound awkward. Like exchanging names makes me feel somehow vulnerable. Maybe it’s because nobody knows my name here except for the few people who keep the fighting ring going. I’m not as popular as Hulk, the crowd just calls me ponytail or boy. Or *you*, punch him!

Feeling a bit flustered and so damn confused about it, I take a step toward the door, but Rague moves in front of me.

“Why are you being so stubborn?” I huff, not feeling even slightly afraid of him. Stupidly, I might add. He flattens his adversary in every fight. Nevertheless, both my body and my brain are telling me that he won’t hurt me.

“Why are you being so unreasonable?” he annoyingly counters.

“I need some destressing, perhaps.” I let the innuendo sink in, raising a challenging brow at him. The vein in his forehead starts to throb. I bite the inside of my cheek against the smirk that desperately wants to escape. Because something tells me that if I keep poking him, he might actually end up knocking me against the wall—and fucking me. *A guy can hope.*

Despite the fact that he doesn’t make a move but continues to observe me with a passive expression on his serious face, I see through him. He wants me but hesitates for some reason. And although I would fucking like a repeat of his enormous cock in my throat, and I’d probably be able to have it if I kept pushing him, I’m not in the mood for another fight tonight.

“Look, I sucked you once. It doesn’t mean you’re in my debt or anything. Okay?” I look straight into his eyes to convey how serious I am about it, and then I push past him. And he lets me go. I’m not delusional enough to think I have the strength to move Rague, he just allows it.



It's disappointing how easily he dropped it. I actually do need to destress, and some fooling around with Rague would have been very welcome. But I guess I have to settle for my trusty hand again, and since Sully is away, I'm free to do so. Maybe it's for the best. I need to put an end to this crush before it becomes unmanageable.

I quickly rush out of the bathroom and the building. It's so damn cold, I need to get a pair of gloves unless I don't mind losing a couple of fingers. I'm halfway through the parking lot when his voice makes me freeze.

"So, you can stalk me to my home, but I can't tell you when you're doing something as fucked up as going against a fighter much stronger than you?" My mouth turns dry. Damn it! I knew Lori's shitty driving would get us caught. *So, that was his home.*

My mind quickly finds a snarky reply. "Is your car the *Knight Rider* type or do you have eyes in the back of your head?" I turn around, seeing him prowling toward me, almost menacingly. I suddenly feel like prey. An eager one, though. And I slowly back away until my spine is pressed against the cold metal of a car. Soon, I feel the coldness spreading over my back. *Shitty puffer.* My fingers tighten around the backpack handle; the hard, cheap fabric digs into my palm.

What the fuck am I doing? I don't cower in a corner. Never.

"Who's stalking now?" I try for a confident tone, but it sounds too breathy. Trepidation and desire are rolling inside of me, and I fucking love that *he's* the one causing them.

"You need to stop this, Ollie." My name on his lips sounds delicious. I want to hear him say it again. And again while he's emptying his balls on my face.

"Stop what?" I bite my lower lip, and yes! His eyes fall there.

Instead of answering, he asks, “Why were you following me? And who was the person in the car with you?” He doesn’t sound or look disturbed by my stalkerish behavior, more...suspicious.

“I wasn’t following you per se,” I lie through my teeth. And hell will freeze over before I put Lori in danger.

The light from the street lamp creates shadows on his face, turning his scowl into a dark, hair-raising glower. It has my breath catching, my body feels petrified. He looks strong. Majestic. Like he’s ready to take anything I throw at him. He could break me with those large hands, and the realization, instead of making me run, sets me on fucking fire. My lips part, my breath and pulse start racing, and my cock plumps all the way, tenting my sweats. He has this effect on me just by walking toward me. Would I black out if he fucked me?

He stops in front of me, just a breath away. The points of his boots press against my old sneakers. I tremble, but not from the cold. I’m so turned on, I’m sweating. It’s his commanding presence, his rich musky scent, the force of his gaze on me, so utterly focused, like I’m the only thing worth watching.

He grabs my wrists, forcing me to drop my backpack on the ground, and pins them on either side of my shoulders against the cool surface of the car. His grip is firm, a touch painful. I don’t know how, but again, I get the sense that he’d let me go if I asked him. Stupid of me to think that since I don’t know him from Adam. But my gut is usually right. Following it has saved my neck more than once in the past.

“Try again, kitty. I’m very good at detecting lies. You just lied to me, and I don’t like it.” His deep rumbling words make me gasp. I feel the strange urge to apologize to him, which I promptly push away.

Instead, I whisper sultrily, “And what else are you good at?”

“Making people talk.” Interesting, since he doesn’t talk much. His eyes are studying my lips. And when I slick them with my tongue, he seems hypnotized by the movement.

“I bet. And what technique do you use to make them talk?” My heart is trying to punch out of my chest for how fast it’s running. How I’m still standing is beyond me.

“Anything. I use any tool at my disposal,” he growls again.

A hundred filthy images shuffle through my mind—me caged under Rague while he uses his *tool* on me. I open my legs and arch mindlessly against him, pressing my throbbing cock against his leg. He pushes back, slotting his large hips between my thighs, pinning me to the car and forcing me to feel his whole massive, hard body.

I moan, trying to stroke my aching dick while feeling his huge monstrous beauty growing hard and ready against my belly. But I can hardly move, held down by his much heavier physique. Our size difference turns me the fuck on. The knowledge that I’m at the mercy of all this brawn...fuck. My ass clenches and unclenches, feeling so damn empty.

“Let’s try again. Why did you follow me, Ollie?” he asks with that gruff tone that makes precum drip off my slit. When he says my name with that commanding tone, I want to spill all my secrets.

“I...” I swallow hard; his breath feels so warm against my lips. His tempting mouth is so close, I want a taste. I need it. Following my desire, I move my face toward his, but he jerks back.

I can’t stop myself from whimpering, my head falls back on the car door.

“No kissing,” he says drily. The sting from the rejection is washed away by hot pleasure when he bends his knees and thrust his hips up so that his

heavy cock rubs against mine. His groan is deep and sexy, and I see stars from the rough friction. But his words ring in my head again.

No kissing. No touching. I might need a rulebook with this guy.

“Tell me why, Ollie,” he orders me with another firm thrust. God, he feels so fucking good. If this is the technique he was talking about, sign me up.

But I need to focus. I can lie to him again and make it good this time—my life with Dick has honed my abilities as a master bullshitter—still, the thought leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

I can walk away...but bullshitting myself? That I never do. I want him, badly. Walking away isn't an option, not before I feel his massive beauty pumping inside of me.

So, the truth it is, but...“If you want to know why I followed you, I want something in exchange.”

He remains silent. His searing gaze is steady on me. Waiting.

I stare at his lips, silently telling him what I want.

He must get it because his body stiffens against me. Wariness fills his eyes.

I enjoy pushing other people's limits. Have done it since I was a kid. It has become natural to me. I do it without even being aware sometimes. And I don't fucking care about overstepping. But this time is different. This time, I have to remind myself that Rague is a big boy and forcing him to do something against his will is ridiculous. Especially for a guy half his size.

He's still staring at me with a grave look, which only stokes the fire of my desire, and at the same time, almost makes me take my words back. But then he gives me a stilted nod.

“Why?” His voice is alarmingly low, and goosebumps erupt all over my arms.

“I don’t know,” I tell him, quickly adding when I feel his fingers tightening around my wrists, “I swear I don’t. When I saw you getting in your car, I just followed my crazy-ass instinct.”

He frowns at me, his eyes flicking all over my face, looking for something. Probably a sign of deception. But I’m being utterly honest. And it’s fucking embarrassing. I feel heat rising from my neck to my cheeks. I can’t be blushing, damn it!

“If you haven’t realized yet, I’m attracted to you,” I spit out. And just to be blatantly clear I add, “I want to fuck, okay?”

I don’t think it’s humanly possible for his dark brows to go higher than that. The curls falling on his forehead are hiding them completely now. The total surprise on his face would be funny if my cock wasn’t throbbing like a motherfucker.

*Fuck this!* I suddenly say to myself before crushing my mouth to his. His lips are softer than I expected them to be, which makes me slightly self-conscious about my chapped ones—I forgot to apply lip balm after the fight. Rague’s mouth remains closed while I continue brushing my lips over his. His cock is still hard and heavy against my belly though, proof that he likes what I’m doing. So, I step up my game. I suck lightly on his lower lip and then slick it with my tongue. He finally parts his lips, and I swiftly take advantage, angling my head to the right and pushing my tongue inside. I feel him suck in a breath before carefully opening wider, so that I can deepen the kiss. He tastes sweet and spicy, my new absolute favorite flavor. His hesitant response turns passionate and aggressive. He’s in total control of the kiss and is devouring me now. The stubble of his jaw scratches against my smooth skin, and the sensation makes my toes curl. I’m eagerly swallowing the animalistic sounds he’s pouring down my throat.

The kiss is commanding and filthy, but I detect a hint of tenderness in the way his tongue searches mine and his lips pause and hover over my mouth. I push my head back against the car to let some much-needed air into my lungs.

“Fuck. Is there anything you aren’t good at?” I blurt out while panting. A faint blush blooms on his cheeks, but it has to be a trick of the artificial light from the street lamp. Guys like Rague don’t get flushed when complimented.

His fingers let go of my left hand to delicately touch my reddened chin and cheek. His satisfied hum goes straight to my dick. Does he like to see the marks his stubble left on my face?

The cut on my cheek from the fight stings; the wound must be bleeding once more. I probably need to glue it shut when I get back home. Rague lifts his thumb, and I see a drop of my blood on the tip. Looking straight into my eyes, he slowly brings it to his lips and sucks on it. A lusty growl leaves his lips, and my legs almost give out. Holy fuck, he’s so manly. My free hand slides between our bodies to grip his hard cock through the jeans. He grunts, his eyes close for a moment, and when he opens them again, they are two pools of raw desire. His hand drops down and closes over mine, forcing my fingers to curl around his thick length more.

“You want it, kitty?” *Kitty again?* “My hard, fat cock?” he asks in a gravelly whisper while using my hand to jerk himself off. I swear, I’m about to combust.

He’s so damn wide and rigid. He’ll split me in two if he pushes inside me. And I want him to do it. I want him to break me. My mind and my body are in total agreement. They want my hole to take the place of my hand.

My mouth hangs open at the thought of being stretched by his thick, delicious meat, and I moan like the damn whore I am for it. Rague moves his hips and thrusts into my fist, setting the rhythm. His eyes are on my lips, but he doesn't try to kiss me again. His knuckles rubbing against my dick are turning my brain into a melting mess.

This is the hottest thing that's ever happened to me and we still have all our clothes on. I need more. My mouth closes around his lower lip, and I suck hard, enjoying his groan. I give it a bite, and he jolts with what might be surprise but doesn't pull away.

Instead, he lifts both my hands over my head, making me whimper because I want to keep touching him. He ignores me and transfers my wrists to one hand, and then? He starts humping me furiously against the car. Through my thin sweatpants I can feel him, stiff and heavy, stroking roughly and mercilessly against my weeping cock.

The car handle digs hard into my back, but I don't fucking care. I'm so damn close. I lift one leg and curl it around his waist to feel him better. He's kissing me like a madman. I just keep my mouth open and let him take whatever he wants.

As he controls every angle of the kiss with his dominating tongue and restless lips, I jump up and curl my other leg, wrapping my lower body firmly around him. He snarls inside my mouth and grabs a handful of my ass in a bruising grip. He never stops pumping those hips. His fingers keep my arms stretched over my head, and I feel my eyes rolling back. So fucking close.

"More!" I beg, and I hear him swear.

"Such a fucking good boy! You can take it, can't you? Take me."

*Yes! Yes, I can,* I want to say, but I'm only able to nod.

I want him inside me, now. But his insanely hot words hissed on my lips are followed by searing white pleasure. And I hear myself moaning his name repeatedly while I come and come and come until Rague freezes against me. I hear a door banging against a wall, and I go from high and flying to low and crushing within two seconds. The barely-there afterglow buzz is instantly killed by some distant laughter and approaching footsteps.

I hurriedly drop my shaking legs. Rague lets my hands go and takes a step back. Without his hellish warm body against mine, the coldness of the night seeps rapidly to my bones, making me shudder.

When I look down, I see a stain on my sweats. Fucking hell, I haven't come in my pants since high school. And then I met Rague and did it not once, but twice in the span of days. My eyes go to his painfully hard dick. I wish I could do something about it, but the voices are getting dangerously closer. I'm really not up for a voyeuristic show and the consequent homophobic slurs at the moment. Not with jizz making my briefs so damn uncomfortable. My wet balls will soon freeze in this weather.

I untuck my tank top and pull it down over the stain, trying to hide it as well as I can. I grab my backpack and haul it on my shoulder. Only then, do I venture a glance at Rague's face. Half of it is covered in shadow, but I can still see his puffed, red lips. His piercing eyes have turned stormy, giving me a hard stare like he's trying to see what's going on in my head.

"Hulk! My man." The sudden shout makes me jump.

Two clearly drunk guys are walking unsteadily on their feet toward us. Rague watches me for two more breaths before turning toward them. I use the distraction to sneak around the car and disappear into the night.

Only when my breath turns short and I'm sure he isn't following me, do I slow my steps.



Fleeing like this is cowardly, but what I saw in his eyes...they were laser-focused on me, like he was trying to catch a glimpse of my soul. I felt like the metaphorical deer in headlights, scared shitless. And self-conscious. So damn self-conscious. Because what I have inside isn't pretty. It's a twisted mess of despicable past actions and rotten thoughts, and I don't fucking want to show it to anybody. Ever.

I let out a long sigh. The way he made me come, though. Fucking hell, that had been glorious. And of course, I want more. My full crush has just turned into a fixation.

I hope the long walk home will help straighten out my thoughts. I need to remember my goal. Keep Sully safe. Leave West Garfield Park and Dick behind. Start a new life.

There's no room for the big, cranky beast and his hard, thick, delicious beauty.

Or is there?



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## Chapter 5

*RAGUEL*

I grab my vibrating phone while I pull my pickup over to the side of the road and open the “Foster and not Bros” group chat. The name is a dig at Raph and the way he calls us his *foster* brothers.

Rami- *Mira, have you set a date, yet?*

Gabe- *I'll regret this...but who are you talking to?*

Uri- *Robots can actually have regrets??*

Michael- *Rami is talking about me and Raph \*eyeroll emoji\**

Sari- *You combined their names, like famous power couples*

Rami- *Precisely*

Me- *Miphael sounds better*

Raph- *Yeah*

Gabe- *I agree*

Uri- *Hands down*

Rami- *Fuck you, Rague. Mipahel, date?*

Raph- *Tomorrow*

Uri- *What???*

Rami- *WTF?*

I'm about to type my surprise when another text appears in the chat.

Michael- *Not tomorrow! Raph, I told you I can only take two weeks off from work in a month*

Raph- *Fuck work! We're getting married tomorrow and honeymooning or what the fuck ever people do after*

Michael- *No, we won't...yet*

Rami- *Okay. Fifty green ones say Mike will prevail*

Me- *Betting on Raph*

Michael has my brother wrapped around his finger, but Raph is a sneaky son of a bitch. He will find a way to move up the date.

Gabe- *Linda and I bet on Raph*

Uri- *Mike. And if you make me lose, you'll have to pay for our next lunch!*

Michael- *I cannot believe you all!*

Raph- *Me. And I raise the bet to 100*

Michael- *Raph!*

Rami- *You can't bet on yourself...can he?*

Gabe- *Sure he can*

Michael- *The bet is off and the wedding too!*

Raph- *The fuck? I'm coming home, babe. Don't fucking move*

Michael- *I'm cooking barefoot in the kitchen, waiting for my TROGLODYTE to come and light up my day!*

Uri- *Since when do you cook?*

Raph- *Move that ass from the sofa and I'll turn it red*

Rami- *The following show will be R-rated...*

A GIF appears in the chat of Rami oohing and winking. I grunt. He shaved his reddish hair but his beard is still insanely long.

Me- *Shave that damn bush as well, Unabomber*

Uri- *Looks more like a beggar-looking ginger Gandalf*

Gabe- *Bluto from Popeye*

Sari- *Oh, the Grinch*

Me- *The Grinch is all fur*

Gabe- *Who knows what's under those two-sizes-too-small t-shirts*

Michael- *He looks like a very dumb Hagrid to me*

Rami- *Jkghdfiouasdpf*

Uri- *??*

Rami- *I key smashed you!*

Uri- *So rudely lame*

I've had enough of this.

Me- *Rami, where are you at? I'm five minutes from Lenny's gym*

Rami- *Be there in fifteen. Damn Chicago traffic*

I toss my phone back on the passenger seat and wait for the next car to pass by before pulling back on the street. The phone keeps vibrating, but I ignore it.

My fingers tapping against the wheel gives away my impatience. I'm finally about to get inside Lenny's gym, maybe even his office, and closer to ending the guy himself. But that's not why I'm feeling restless.

I brush the tip of my thumb over my lower lip, remembering the kiss once again. The damn kiss that awakened a feral craving, a possessiveness I've never felt before. I've been fighting to recover from it, from Ollie's velvety

mouth and the feisty way he bit my lower lip, turning the kiss from not nearly enough to a blazing hot fire.

I lost it. I went at Ollie like a fucking animal. But instead of screaming in fear, he pleaded for more. More of me. But can he actually take me? I'm starting to think he can. Doesn't matter though because he will get it. All of it.

I'm too obsessed now to go back.

Two days have passed, and I've kept my distance—*forced* myself is more like it, my busy job helped with that. I've asked Rami for more information on Ollie though, shutting down my brother's nosy questions. For the time being. We know his father knows Lenny, Uri took some pictures of them talking. We need to know more.

And I need to see Ollie again. Stalking him in return seems like a good idea right at this moment. He disappeared that night, but he didn't look upset about what had happened. He came in his pants for God's sake, while my aching dick remained hard till I jerked off at home.

I don't scare him. That's not why he left. His blatant careless and reckless attitude around me is what captivated me in the first place. But now, there's a ball of need pressing heavily on my chest. The frustration and dissatisfaction around it are growing the more time I spend away from Ollie, turning me into a cranky bastard.

I'm not used to waiting for sex. I get what I want when I want with a quick text. I've never felt this powerful addiction toward anyone else. It urges me to satisfy my needs, just like my revenge on donors does. But I surely can't go about dealing with Ollie like I do donors, drugging him and tying him to a chair. Can I? The tying up part makes my cock tingle, though.

I park my car near the nondescript, two-story building made of grey bricks. The plain sign over the door reads Gym. It looks unremarkable and forgettable. If I didn't know it was intentionally done to keep curious people away, I'd have chalked it up to a bad marketing move. Lenny uses the gym to launder his illicit activities and to conduct *meetings*. Those are other reasons why his clientele is meticulously selected.

I get out of my pickup, grab the duffle bag from the passenger seat, and close the door.

Near the front entrance, on the wall, I notice the video intercom. After pushing the button and waiting a couple of seconds, I hear a click coming from the door. I push it and it opens. As I step inside, the smell of sweat, stagnant air, and leather hits my senses. The room is wide and shaped like an L. There's a boxing ring at the very end, and the rest of the space is filled with machines and equipment. It looks like an ordinary gym.

On the far right, a narrow metal staircase leads up to a black door flanked by two guards. That must be the office.

I see Lenny coming my way after patting another fighter on the back. "Hulk, it's a pleasure to have you here. Where's Carl?" Lenny's asking about Rami, who's pretending to be my manager. My hacker of a brother created new identities for both of us, just in case Lenny decided to check us out.

I accept Lenny's extended hand and grip it tighter than I should, enjoying the way his shoulder slightly lowers under the pain.

"Traffic," I succinctly reply, letting go of his sweaty palm and pretending not to see him flexing his fingers.

"That hand of yours is a damn weapon!" I can see the wheels turning inside his cunning head. "I have some things that need my attention, but Carl told

me you'd be interested in something...different." He raises a questioning brow at me. Is he talking about beating boys to death?

I grunt, keeping my dumb fighter facade, while inside, I'm fucking seething. "I'm interested in money."

My reply seems to satisfy him. "I have a proposition that would interest you greatly."

His wily smile is back. "Find me when Carl arrives, okay? We have much to discuss." He looks slightly excited. I simply nod. My eyes are on him for a couple of minutes, but then I force myself to find the locker room.

When I walk inside, the room smells like dirty socks and lemony cleaners. My gaze flickers around the lines of grey metal lockers and farther down to the shower stalls at the end of the room. I move deeper inside when I hear voices. I round the next row of lockers and my eyes fall on long, brown wavy hair tied in a half-ponytail, a lean muscular back clad in pink, and a firm, high, round ass. I stifle an inner groan and my cock thickens as I remember how soft and meaty those butt cheeks had felt in my hands while I was wildly going at Ollie's dick.

I realize he's talking to someone. The tall guy is crowding his personal space, smiling at him with leery eyes. Ollie's back is to me, so I can't see his face, but he sure as fuck doesn't seem annoyed by the other guy's proximity. When the guy lifts his hand and places it on Ollie's arm, all I can think about is how that sweet ass has had some other man's fingers on it at some point.

The simple thought of someone else touching Ollie's naked buttcheeks creates an odd mix of raw lust and extreme jealousy, and my blood boils with it. It's obvious that I don't want anyone else's hands on him. The idea of going in there and sucker punching the motherfucker's face before



hauling Ollie over my shoulder to get a bruising grip on his sweet ass feels damn right to me. But I force myself to remember the reason why I'm here, and also the fact that I don't know how Ollie would react to my possessiveness. Do I really care though?

Still, I have this urge to talk to him. And when I notice the slight tension in Ollie's shoulders, a wave of protectiveness slams into me. In a few strides I'm behind him. I plaster my front to his back, holding in a grunt at the feel of the soft curve of his ass against my balls. I turn my most stern look to the tall fucker in front of him. Ollie goes rigid, snapping his head up, which reaches my shoulder. As soon as he realizes it's me, he instantly relaxes. It pleases me greatly.

He smirks at me and then lets his head fall on my collarbone, turning toward the guy again. The fucker has dropped his hand from Ollie's arm and is looking warily between us. I know him. He's Scorpion's manager; I've seen him around at the factory. A shifty, slimy dude with beady eyes and a receding hairline. What is he doing talking to Ollie?

"Hulk. You finally made it."

I growl menacingly at him, and he takes a few steps back.

"Think about what I said," he tells Ollie. The sly way he's looking at him rubs me the wrong way. But before I can do anything, he quickly leaves without daring to look at me. *Chickenshit!*

I lower my head, waiting for Ollie to look up. When he doesn't, I grab his chin and angle his face toward me, raising a brow at him.

"What?" he huffs with annoyance, puckering his lips. The boy has a fucking beautiful mouth. More so at the end of our kiss, all roughed up, spit slicked, and swollen red. His pretty eyes are on my mouth as well. Is he reliving the

wild, frantic way we kissed as vividly as I am? When he licks his lips and his gaze turns darker, I have my answer.

Still, the protectiveness wins against my lust.

“What was that about? With Scorpion’s manager?” I toss my duffle bag on the bench closer to me.

“Who, Bill? He’s a friend of...my old man.” He pauses on the word *friend* like he wants to say something else. But he doesn’t. I know that Richard Truman, Ollie’s father, is mixed up in drugs and prostitution. He must have some kind of arrangement with Bill. I also know Ollie works with his father at times. The fact that he’s fighting in the illegal ring proves that. But according to Rami, word on the street is that Ollie hates him. So, why work for him? Don’t like the answers popping up inside my head.

Gripping his chin more firmly, I ask him, “When are you going to cancel the fight against Scorpion?”

He stiffens and narrows his eyes at me. The brown spot in his left orb almost sparkles under the white lights of the locker room.

“Why do you care?” His voice is full of suspicion and caution. Like he’s only used to conniving people. Doesn’t he have anybody who takes care of him? *I could do that*. The sudden thought fills me with purpose.

“Why?” he repeats.

The truth? I cannot unsee the pictures of those young boys’ battered, lifeless bodies lying among trash and metal waste. The callous way they were used and dumped shows the true cruel colors of whoever is behind it. The thought of Ollie becoming one of them makes my blazing hot anger come straight to the surface. Dangerously so.

But I can’t tell him any of that. Can’t blow my cover. “It’s an uneven fight,” I say between gritted teeth.

The light in his eyes dims slightly. "I'm stronger than I look. Didn't I prove that already?" He licks his lips suggestively. A grunt escapes me when he grinds his plump booty cheeks against my hardening cock. I feel the movement right to my throbbing balls, and it's so good. My thumb starts mindlessly brushing his lower lip, the tip getting wet with his saliva.

"I can do it again," he offers, licking the end of my finger. "Beauty seems to like the idea." He strokes my erection up and down between his cheeks, as if he needs to show me how interested my beauty...dick is. The nickname is ridiculous and flattering at the same time. I can't think of one person daring enough to name my dick.

"Then why did you run the other night?" My hand grabs his hip, fingers sinking in. His booty massage stops, and he pushes away from me. Don't like the sudden distance, but I let him go. My hard cock strongly disagrees with me.

"I didn't run. I just wasn't in the mood for chitchat," he says matter-of-factly, turning around to look straight at me. The kitty is showing his claws again. He's also lying to me again, and I don't fucking like it.

Donors always lie, but they do it because they are scum and don't want to die. What's Ollie's reason? He doesn't look uneasy around me, but he's prickly and defensive, with his arms crossed over his chest. And so damn brokenly beautiful.

"Cancel the fight," I order him.

His light green eyes turn hard, then he lets his arms drop to his sides, and without a word, heads toward the door.

"Where are you going?" I ask.

"Exercising," he replies without stopping. When he walks past me, that sweet honey scent of his reaches my nose again. What would it be like to

wake up with it on my pillow?

I blink and find myself alone in the room. I guess a bit of extra training would be good, and while exercising, I can keep an eye on Lenny's office. I grab a towel and a bottle of water, and place my bag in one of the lockers.

As soon as I leave the changing room and step among the machines, my eyes go to Ollie. He's on the treadmill, pumping his strong legs in a steady run, the defined muscles in his arms flexing with the swinging movement. The loose black shorts he's wearing leave his athletic calves bare, covered in fine brown hair—so he has got some. His sneakers are flying on the moving black belt. Running has never been my thing. Looks boring, and I've never seen the appeal...until now. Now, I'm staring mesmerized at Ollie's fluid, rhythmic, graceful moves. Ogling that bouncy ass and imagining it making the same jiggling movement against my pumping cock. There're other people training around us, not many, but I don't want to attract too much attention to me or Ollie. Taking my gaze away from him, I roll my head back and forth on my shoulders and make my way to one of the sandbags a few feet away. I drop the towel and bottle on a nearby bench and keep my eyes firmly on the red leathery bag as I start to slam my fists into it. The chain it's hanging on rattles as I hit the side like a roundhouse and then deliver some gut jabs. The sack turns into Lenny, screaming in pain, sobbing, bloody, and defeated, terror filling his expression. I pound it harder and sigh contently at the violent image, taking another deep breath.

A guy comes over and offers to hold the sandbag while I punch it. I snarl a no, glaring at him as he scrambles and backs away. My large size combined with my angry glower can turn handy at times, a fairly quick problem-solving tool, and it keeps most people the fuck away. Except Ollie. He takes it as a challenge.

I chance a glance his way. He's still on the treadmill, but his eyes are on me, and a small smirk curls his lips. I like that, feeling his gaze on me.

I move on to weights and squat reps. Ollie has his back to me again from where I'm standing, but I can see his reflection in the long mirror on the wall. He is studying my body very intently.

The grey sweats I wear are tighter than usual, and by the heated expression on his face, I think he likes them. The black tank top that shows off my chest also seems to get a lot of his attention.

After a while, he steps off the treadmill and rubs his neck and face with his tank top, displaying his six-pack abs and the start of a dark happy trail, while walking toward the bench press. The sweat has turned the skin on his arms and shoulders slick and glistening. Deliciously attractive. I wait for him to change the weights on either side of the bar and then recline with his back on the bench before approaching him.

"May I?" I point at the spot behind the bar, offering him my help.

He gives me another smirk while nodding. I move behind his head at the end of the bench with spread legs, my crotch almost looming over his face. This is my favorite position for face-fucking, watching the shape of my cock sliding inside the throat while the guy is choking on it.

His darkening eyes are zeroed in on my groin, and I can read the equally filthy thoughts going on in his head. I step closer, and if we were alone, I'd yank his face against my semi and make him breathe in the sweat on my balls. I know he'd love it, from the way his nostrils flare like he's trying to inhale me. He'd nuzzle his nose and mouth deep in my pubic hair to get a taste. The bulge in my sweatpants is growing, and when he notices it, a low, "Fuck me," leaves his mouth.

Ollie seems to suddenly remember where we are and turns his attention to the ceiling. He shoves the bar up before bringing it back down toward his chest, taking a deep breath with every push upward. He's lifting an impressive amount of weight, especially for his lean body. His arms are bulging, veins popping, as he raises and lowers the bar without much difficulty. Low hisses leave his lips every time he lowers the heavy weights. I can't stop my stares of appreciation. His chest seems to grow under the pressure, his long torso and strong legs splayed out in front of my hungry eyes.

On the next lift, his arms look unstable, so I bend my knees and grab the weight bar with one hand to position it back on the rack. My crotch gets much closer to his face in this position, and I see him tilting his head back toward it.

His voice is a soft, dirty whisper. "If you keep waving that gorgeous cock in front of my eyes, I won't be able to stop my mouth from slobbering all over it."

*Jesus Christ!* I grunt and grab on to the weight bar till my knuckles turn white.

He bites his lower lip while heat splashes across his face and aims his challenging, pupil-blown eyes at mine. "I want to bury my face in your balls and taste them while I feel the underside of your cock rubbing on me."

I grunt. Damn sassy kitty.

He smirks smugly, and for a nanosecond, I hold my breath, contemplating the idea of giving him my cock right here and now. But I straighten and take a step back. Ollie makes my brain short-circuit.

"Get up," I growl, grabbing the towel I left on the floor to cover my granite dick clearly tenting my sweats. I'll show him what that filthy talk can get

him—my dick all the way deep inside one of his holes.

As if he can hear my thoughts, he quickly stands up, and we both turn toward the locker room when I hear, “Oliver! Where the fuck are you?”

His lusty expression turns empty, and he takes a few steps away from me, making my mood nosedive.

“Fuck. I gotta go,” he says. I can see the clear reluctance in his eyes before he scurries away. My gaze follows him as Ollie stops in front of his father, Richard Truman. He looks just like he does in the picture Rami sent me: old, unfit, and mean-looking. He angrily grabs Ollie’s bicep and squeezes. I curl my lips over my teeth and take a step toward them with the intent of fucking breaking that hand. But Ollie says something to him, and his father lets him go.

Ollie’s body is as stiff as a board when his father says something else. They’re too far for me to hear, but Ollie jerks back. I want to go to him, but I’m helpless as I watch them leave the gym, pain invades my head. The dormant anger inside of me awakes and begins pushing against my mental barriers. I slap a hand on the wall, nostrils flaring, trying to keep control of my mind, to reassert my grasp on reality. Every muscle in my body is rigid, ready, and alert. I have to stop it.

My head is pulsing. Pain, so much pain. I feel it crawling under the skin of my arms, like a snake slithering inside me, rolling in my guts, piercing at my temples. I just want it to stop.

“Easy! I’m here,” I suddenly hear Rami’s voice next to my ear. Fuck, thank God!

I can feel the round-shaped scars behind my ear throbbing. I force my hands to unclench. I use the breathing techniques that Meg taught me. In through the nose for three counts. Hold for three counts, and out through the mouth

for three more counts. As I continue breathing, I feel the pain easing away my body relaxing little by little. My senses begin to function again. I can feel the coldness of the bathroom tiles against my forehead, smell the sweat and pee, see the light coming from the small window on the far wall. Hear Rami's soft and out-of-tune singing voice.

The phantom pain is slowly subsiding. More minutes pass.

"Shake It Off?" I croak, while slowly looking around the bathroom Rami must have dragged me into.

"I was listening to Tay-Tay in the car. Got stuck in my head." He's checking that the stalls are empty. When he's done, he leans his hip against a white sink, a worried look on his face. "How do you feel? You haven't had a near Hulk episode in years."

*A Hulk episode*, that's what Rami calls it when the pain from those years comes back, giving life to a rage so strong, it possesses me, a red haze attack that turns me into a furious, mindless beast.

I look at my pale face in the mirror. My eyes look hollow, but some color is coming back in my cheeks.

"I'm okay." I splash cold water on my face. The sharp sound of the paper towels being pulled out of the metal box on the wall makes me wince. I'm always hyper-sensitive after an attack, feeling overwhelmed, but I recover rather quickly. "Did someone see me?"

Rami shakes his head, making me sigh in relief. "What triggered it?"

I rub my fingers over the stubble on my cheek. One minute I was about to head toward Ollie and his father, and the next, I felt the phantom pain piercing my head.

I groan. Maybe Ollie's reaction to his father reminded me of myself and the years I was experimented on. Or this whole situation with Lenny, of feeling



stuck, caged, not able to take my revenge, is messing with my head.

“We are close to getting Lenny and whoever else is behind this,” my brother whispers, reading my mind.

“Do you want to back out? I can manage by myself at this point,” he offers.

“Fuck no. Lenny is mine!” I growl menacingly, trying to keep my voice down. Rami doesn’t look convinced, but he doesn’t voice his doubts.

“Let’s get out of here. Go somewhere we can talk.” Rami gestures to the bathroom door. He’s right, it’s too risky to discuss this here.

Lenny is nowhere to be seen when we make our way back into the gym. I grab my bag from the locker room and walk to my car.

*So much for keeping an eye on his office.*

We drive for a while, me following Rami’s car until it stops in the back of a large Walmart parking lot. I leave the engine on, the hot air coming from the vents creating a warm cocoon in this cold winter day. Rami knocks on the passenger window, and I let him in.

“Did you dig more into Ollie’s background? Find anything of interest?” I ask.

Rami hands me a bottle of water, and I drink avidly. I forgot mine at the gym.

“Ollie, eh?” He raises a brow at the nickname. “Not much that you don’t already know. On Richard Truman, though, he and Lenny go way back. Grew up in the same neighborhood and were arrested together for possession of heroin. He might be into this fight ring shit as well. Since his son is.”

“Yeah, I think he’s got some kind of arrangement with Scorpion’s manager.”

“Bill? He’s a greedy, depraved piece of shit. Had to shower twice after chatting with him.” Rami shudders dramatically. “He got on my donor list.”

“Text me date and time.” I’d like to use a couple of knives on him. “I found him talking to Ollie about something.”

“You seem to care about him.”

I grunt. “Whatever Bill told him, it made Ollie uneasy.”

“Hell, I fucking hate to work like this,” Rami swears. “Also, the new drug we found in the dead boys’ blood has hit the streets. I asked Serena to alert me in case something about that sedatives mix came out. And it did. In the last few days, three victims of rape had traces of it in their system.”

“Fuck!”

“Exactly. We need to find the evidence and through Lenny, get to the root of this clusterfuck. I got a peek at his office when I arrived. I had a chat with him on the stairs—while you were *training* with Ollie. Didn’t see any computer or phone in there. But there’s a big-ass desk.”

“We should just break in,” I told him, full of impatience.

“I thought about it. You could take care of the guards, and I could divert the police to another address and bypass the alarm. But what if there’s no evidence in there? As Uri said we’d spook him or blow our cover for nothing. We need to wait.”

I growl angrily, halting his words for a second.

“Wait for Clover. Or for Lenny to trust us enough to let us in and place a bug.”

“It could take ages. We still don’t know what is actually going on.”

“Yeah, but this could be bigger than we anticipated, and we need to tread lightly.”

“They beat young boys to death, Rami,” I vent in frustration.

“Seven boys, I know. I saw the pictures. I hate it just as you do, Rague.”

I know he does. Maybe even more. After a minute of silence, I say, “I think his father is forcing him to fight.”

“Ollie?” He cocks his head with curiosity.

I nod, looking absentmindedly at the people leaving the big store. They are so blissfully ignorant of the malevolent evils that lurk close by. But I know what malignant looks like, feels like, sounds like. I was too weak to stop it at the time, only a kid. But I’m a huge motherfucker now, and I’m going to crush it over and over and over again. Until my last breath.

“I’ll ask around, but Lenny invited us to watch Scorpion’s next fight... against Ollie.”

*He can’t do that. He won’t!*

I grit my teeth against the anger and embrace the protectiveness washing over me.

“Hey, calm down. Didn’t mean to rattle you again,” Rami replies to my growl. “Lenny said the fight will take place in another location.”

“Where?”

“Didn’t say. Not yet. We’ll find a way to stall.”

“No stalling. Ollie doesn’t fight,” I hiss between my gritted teeth.

“And how are you going to stop that from happening? Tie the twunk to your bed till we end whoever is responsible?” He snorts derisively. But his mouth falls open when he sees my pondering expression.

“Whoa, a brazen mouth and tight ass, and you’re a fucking goner.”

I grab the wheel and tighten my fingers around the worn brown leather.

“Stop looking at his ass.” Another growl leaves my lips, and Rami’s eyes widen.

“That’s a nice impersonation of a jealous, demon-possessed cheerleader.”

Rami is the embodiment of exasperation.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”

I sigh. “I haven’t had a red haze attack in fucking four years. But I got close a bunch of times. I just need some time to completely calm down.”

Rami nods in understanding. Music is coming out of the radio, I kept the volume low, but the melodious notes are soothing me. My head drops back on the headrest, and behind my eyelids, Ollie’s face appears. His cute angular chin and that pair of light green eyes. That boy surely does something to me.

“Awww, you look miserable when you’re in lurve.” My brother draws a heart in the air with his black gloved index fingers.

“Fucking stop. I need to find him.” And somehow stop him from fighting. Something in me keeps saying, *must protect, must keep safe*. But can I?

“I could get his cell number...if you tell me what happened with him.”

Rami finishes with what he thinks is a coaxing tone. How the fuck does he know something happened? Am I that transparent now?

I shield my annoyed expression and crook my finger at him. He leans toward me with an eager face. When he’s close enough, I grab his nape, yank his head to the left, and ignoring his affronted cry, I growl into his earpiece, “Serena, find Oliver Truman’s cell phone number, please.”

“On it, Rague,” she answers.

Rami jerks his head back, and I let him go. He looks pissed. He doesn’t like to be touched and for a completely different reason than mine. He only allows us a slap on the back of his head or a bump on his shoulder whenever we just have enough of him. But nothing else.

I should show some remorse, but I still feel raw and pissed.

“You’re a fucking asshole!” he barks. “And the earpiece is not a microphone, dipshit.” He points angrily at his ear. He’s got me there.

“Serena heard me just fine.” I shrug. “Where’s the microphone then?” My eyes slide down his face and torso. His leather jacket isn’t suitable for this cold weather, but he looks fine.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” He huffs while opening the car door. “Asshole.”

He gets out, and before I can say anything, slams the door so hard, the pickup jerks. Fuck!

I see him stomping all the way to his car. And I do feel bad about it. Our past demons created our limits, and I shouldn’t have pushed Rami’s. What the hell was I thinking? I wasn’t, that’s the problem. I need to fix it. Maybe he’ll just accept my heartfelt apology?

Thirty minutes later, I’m at home when I get a text with a phone number. Ollie’s. And then a pic of Rami’s middle finger. The regretful and succinct message I sent him a few minutes ago didn’t work as I’d hoped. Shit.

I copy Ollie’s phone number into my very short list of contacts and type a text.

*Me- Cancel the fight*

*Ollie- God, is that u? Can u put me in contact with Lucifer? I think I’d have more fun talking to him*

*Me- Kitty*

*Ollie- Rague?*

I smile at his sudden reply.

*Me- Yes*

*Ollie- How did u get this number?*

Me- *If I tell you, will you stop the fight against Scorpion?*

Ollie- *Sure*

Me- *Really?*

Ollie- *Give it a rest!*

Me- *No*

Ollie- *No? Well, u can't tell me what to do, Froilan Maria*

Me- *Are you sure? You seemed to like it*

Instead of a teasing or sassy reply, his next message sounds grave.

Ollie- *I can't cancel it*

Me- *Why?*

The three dots dance for a few seconds but then disappear. I wait a little longer, and when I don't get any text back, I start writing again.

Me- *I can help you if you let me*

After a couple of endless seconds, those dots start flashing on my screen again. On and off, they go. A minute later, I get only:

Ollie- *Why?*

Again, he's asking about my intentions, which even *I* don't understand.

Me- *Because I want to*

Because for the first time in my life, I'm fascinated by someone else. Enthralled. Fucking protective. Because in a very selfish way, I want to feel those lips on me again.

Ollie's cockiness put him on my radar, but that kiss most surely sealed his fate.



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## Chapter 6

*OLIVER*

“I fucking need that money!” Dick’s angry spit lands on my cheek, and the fed-up lizard part of my brain pushes me to fight, to grab the motherfucker’s dirty shirt and smash his face into the plastic coffee table. But I can’t do that. Not yet. So, I rein in my anger and just glare at him.

The overbearing scent of the cigarettes he smokes fills the dirty, cramped living room, sending a message of revulsion and loathing to my brain.

“I’m already losing money with your dumb brother away for two more weeks.” Sully’s incredible pickpocketing skills bring in a considerable sum of money, but he hates to steal from people.

“And Lenny is giving us more green for this fight.” *Us?* He means himself, since he’ll take almost ninety percent of what I make out of it.

“Why?” It looks suspicious that a fucking greedy guy like Lenny is offering more dinero. There must be a catch. What are they scheming? My question is answered with a backhanded slap to my face.



“Don’t you fucking question me, you little prick! You do as I say or you’re out of this house.” He says it like that would be a bad thing.

The aching burn spreads on my cheek, my jaw aches from clenching my teeth. I continue looking at him with hatred in my eyes, unable to stop the memories of all the beatings he’s given me.

He lets out a derisive huff; his putrid breath hits my face while he crowds me again. “But your brother will stay.” He takes a sip from his can of beer and then smirks, knowing very well I’d never leave Sully behind. My heart is trying to push its way out of my chest and my stomach lurches at the thought of Sully alone with him and his *friends*. He’s underage and defenseless.

Plus, Dick wouldn’t stop there. He sells to a couple of cops, one phone call and they’d take me in. The list of illegal things Dick has forced me to do is so long, I’ll never see the light of day again.

But fighting Scorpion? I got all cocky with Rague, even though I know he’s right. Scorpion can reduce me to a pulp. He’s way more experienced than me and bigger. I’m afraid my dirty tricks won’t last long this time. It’s like Dick and Lenny want me to lose.

Dick drops onto the cracking armchair and shifts his lazy ass so that his bulging belly pops out even more.

I wish I could tell him to fuck off, to leave us alone. I hate how easily I let him use me like a puppet. Hate to feel this helpless and weak.

“Maybe you need a few days out there to appreciate what I do for you.”

“And what is that?” I scoff, knowing damn well what my disdainful attitude will provoke but not giving a fuck about it.

He leans forward in the armchair, and I prepare myself, filling up my lungs with air and tensing all over. The instant I feel his fist touching me I release

the air and slightly relax my muscles. His punch hits me right in the guts, and because of my already bruised ribs I bend over with the pain, offering him my face on a silver plate. My jaw cracks under the blow he delivers next, and I have a second of hope that he didn't break any bones before the pain radiates. I stagger back, catching my balance on the sofa.

"Grab your shit and get the fuck out, you limp dick." I hear him slurping from the can, then the sound of the TV comes from behind me.

I hate him so fucking much that for a second, I see myself straddling his disgusting body and pummeling his face until the light turns off in his malicious little eyes. But I wipe the blood from the corner of my mouth, and without a word, I make my way to the bedroom. While I angrily snatch the few meager things I own and stuff them in my backpack, I can't stop myself from feeling so damn worthless.

Why am I putting myself through this? I know Dick has all the power. Why do I fight back? To feel a shred of non-existent control while he takes his anger out on me? I need to do what he asks and keep my head down just for a little bit longer. Because listening to the tiny voice inside my head that tells me I have a choice in this unfairly cruel world only makes me end up on the street without a roof over my head.

I turn a fast glance around the cold room. Sully brought all his stuff on the school trip. There's no proof left that we were ever here. If only I could make it final.

"Don't come back till it's time for the fight." Dick's voice accompanies me on my way out, and I flip him off over my shoulder just as the door is closing behind me, enjoying his angry cussing. But I know his lazy ass won't come after me, so I start slowly walking while I pull my phone out of my puffer.

Lori is away for the week on a business trip. I know where the extra key for his apartment is, but his entire building is being fumigated for pests. The idea of roaches crawling on me makes me shudder. The blonde chick from *Indiana Jones* taking a stroll in that bug-infested secret passage pops inside my head, and I firmly eliminate Lori's place from my options.

Where else could I go? The twenty-four-seven café on Lexington is an option only if the old waitress is there. If I order a coffee, she'll let me stay for a few hours and even take a nap.

My mind diverts to Rague. He said he'd help me if I let him. *Because I want to*. His words still make me shiver deliciously. He didn't mean me crashing at his place, though. He probably lives in that cottage with somebody. I fucking hate that thought, so I push the whole idea away.

A text from Ned appears on the screen. One of the guys is sick and Ned needs a fill-in in an hour. Fuck. My ribs hurt like a bitch, but of course, I reply I'll be there. Can't afford to lose this job. I'll think about finding a place to crash later.



One day after Dick kicked me out, and I feel like shit. I slept at the recycling plant last night. Sneaked inside when the night guard was taking a

leak. The plastic chairs I used as a bed turned my neck stiff, and although I was inside, the place was fucking glacial since the central heating is turned down low at night. I barely slept, and I kept trembling, feeling the cold reaching deep inside my bones.

I slipped out early this morning—luckily unnoticed—and pretended like I just arrived for my shift.

Around lunch time, job done, I'm sitting at a shitty diner, feeling even worse than when I woke up. The waitress places a coffee in front of me, waiting with her notepad ready. I haven't eaten anything since yesterday afternoon, but my stomach recoils at the idea of food, so I tell her I'm fine for now. She huffs and leaves.

The smell of burned, cheap coffee reaches my nose, and I scramble off the chair and run to the bathroom, barely making it to the toilet. When the heaves stop, the sour taste in my mouth makes me retch once again. But my stomach is completely empty.

I flush and haul myself up, trying really hard not to think about what the fabric of my jeans has made contact with on the dirty public floor. My feet take me to the sink, and I rinse my mouth with water. I feel horrible. My skin is on fire, but I'm freezing. I think I got whatever virus that guy at the recycling plant has. He probably spread it around while he was incubating it, as Sully would say.

Damn it! I never get sick. I can't get sick. Not now.

After a few minutes of sulking, I try to think about a solution. I need proper rest and to stay hydrated. The shelter on Sedgwick St. is not going to accept me if I'm ill. None will. I have no health insurance, so hospitals are out. But I need to find a place before I get worse.

One step at a time. First, I need to get some sports drinks and protein bars.

A while later, I'm walking with my head down, a plastic bag with a bottle of Gatorade and a peanut butter bar is dangling from my frozen fingers, while my other arm is wrapped around my aching ribs. My backpack feels too heavy on my shoulders.

I hear music and laughter from a house nearby that makes me just want to scream in anger for the unfairness of it all, and at the same time, beg for shelter. The air is frigid out here.

It started snowing heavily at some point. I can't feel my icy feet inside my sneakers as they leave shoe prints on the white ground. I feel like all the bones in my body are hurting. I'm trying to slow my racing heart to no avail. I realize I'm panting only when I notice that the little cloud of breath forming near my mouth never disappears.

My phone died since I forgot to recharge it last night, and I have no idea where I am. I got lost at some point, and now I'm on a dirty road, surrounded by trees. My eyelids feel heavy, but I'm trying hard to stay conscious—dying of hypothermia is not one of my pre-approved ways to go.

Some hair has fallen in front of my face, but I'm too weak to push it away. My mind is foggy. I'm trying to remember where I was going in the first place, but I suddenly have to stop when I'm hit with a dizzy spell. I'm holding myself up on the trunk of a tree when I hear a voice.

"Kitty?"

*Rague?*

Did I faint and now I'm dreaming? The hand grabbing my arm feels pretty real to me.

"Jesus." I hear Rague's astonished voice. "Have you been walking in this weather?"

I widen my eyes, trying to look more clearly at my clothes. They are white with snow and shivering. *I am shivering.*

Strong fingers grip my chin, tugging my head up. God, he's so strong and commanding, I love it. I go with it as I have no strength in me whatsoever, and even if I did, I don't want to fight him. The first thing to clear in my vision is Rague's face, pinched with worry

It is Rague.

"Ollie, what are you doing here? Are you okay?" His large, cold hand covers my forehead, and I tremble. "You're burning up."

"I know." My voice comes out low and shaky.

It doesn't matter, because he's here. I smile at his rugged face, but he doesn't reciprocate. There's a line between his brows, and I try to lift my hand to smooth it out, but all I can reach is his hip. My frozen fingers land on a small patch of hot skin and quickly make their way under his shirt, pathetically seeking a place to thaw. My ice-cold fingers hurt at first, but then the aching turns to bliss. Rague hisses and stiffens but doesn't push me away. My whole body takes that as an invitation and leans forward until my face presses against his warm chest.

It feels so good. My nose and cheek nuzzle the smooth fabric, and I stop only when my ear finds the steady heartbeat. My legs give out but strong arms wrap around me, and I'm suddenly enveloped by heavenly heat.

"Ollie?" His worried tone reaches a deep, hidden part of me.

I force my eyes open and try to look at him. His stubbled cheek is all I'm able to see, though.

"It's okay. I'll take care of you." His rumbling voice is the sweetest lullaby.

I breathe out a relieved sigh and let my eyes rest. I can do that now. I'm safe.



When I wake, it's to a gentle hand lifting my throbbing head. A soft cool pillow is placed underneath.

But I'm on fire. My body heavy, sweaty, and aching. I pull at the fabric covering my chest. It's wet. I want it off. Deft, quick fingers pull it off me, and I can breathe easier.

"He has a high fever. Nothing to worry about. I think he just caught the seasonal virus that's going around." I hear a stranger saying. "Cold cloths will help with that."

"So, if he takes the medicine, he'll get better?" Rague's voice sounds distressed.

"He also needs plenty of rest and to stay hydrated. Give it a couple of days, and he'll be as good as new."

"Why was he walking near your house, sick and in this weather?" a new voice asks.

I want to keep listening, but my brain becomes lax and everything turns black.



I jerk awake. In the time it takes to shake off sleep, I feel myself being maneuvered. “What? No,” I mumble, confused. My eyes don’t seem to work.

“Shh, just take these pills.” Rague’s raspy voice pushes all the anxiety away. I open my mouth and swallow the pills down with water. He lays me down on the bed again, his big, cool hand covers my forehead.

“Go back to sleep, Ollie. I’ll protect you.” A low whisper drifts to my consciousness. I feel the pressure of warm lips pressing a kiss to my temple before nodding off again.



Shaking. I can’t stop shaking.



“Ollie. What is it?” Rague’s concerned voice reaches me from somewhere nearby.

“C-c-collld,” I stutter. My teeth are chattering, jaw shaking. My whole body is shivering uncontrollably.

Big arms slide under my back and knees, and I’m suddenly airborne. I find myself on a warm lap. Rague’s lap; his musky scent fills my nose. He covers us with a soft blanket. His hands stroke my arm and back, but the coldness won’t go away. I try to fold my legs against my chest to create more warmth, to no avail.

After another endless, agonizing moment, Rague shifts us and lays me sideways, tucking me against his body. He wraps his arms around me, and I automatically slide my legs between his.

I blindly find his fingers on my hip and lace them with mine to keep him next to me, to assure myself that he’s here with me.

“I’m trying to give you my body heat,” he whispers into my hair. Whatever he’s doing is working. Under the blanket this close to Rague, I’m getting warm. My shivers slowly abate, and I start taking real notice of the position of our bodies. My head on his bare bicep, my back to his wide chest. His thigh pushing heavily on mine, legs intertwined. My butt cradled by his hips.

Rague starts softly humming while tracing warm patterns on the back of my hand with his thumb. At the touch, a spot in the center of my chest grows warmer.

We just lay there. And the last thought crossing my exhausted mind is that I don’t want this to ever end.



The light shakes me out of my slumber. I blink a couple of times to adjust my vision. A yawn leaves my lips, and I stroke a hand down my face. I just woke up, but I feel tired. My body is weak. So, I lay still and frown at the pure white ceiling. My gaze flicks around it. Where's the wet, leaking spot? The mold? The cobwebs?

Fuck, I'm not in my bedroom in Dick's house. Where am I? Memories bombard my mind, and I remember Rague finding me on the street and taking care of me.

I look down. There's a door to a bathroom on my left and a high wooden dresser next to it, white curtains framing a window. I push myself up on my elbows to check what's outside when movement out of the corner of my eye gets my attention.

Rague is silently standing in the corner of the room, leaning against the wall. The grey sweats ride low on his trim hips and the cotton shirt wraps his wide chest like a second skin. Despite his relaxed posture, his eyes are as sharp as ever as they stay fixed on me. Studying me.

"How do you feel?" he asks, his thoughts hiding under that blank expression. Did my mind make up his worried voice while I was sick?

I'm about to reply when I realize I'm not wearing my tank top or jeans. I'm freeballing under a huge t-shirt that smells like Rague. Did he change me? I should feel violated, seeing that I was out of it, but for some reason, I trust him. And even if he took a peek, I'd actually like it. But then, the thought of all the inconvenience I put him through makes me feel embarrassed and self-conscious. He must be counting down the minutes before I get out of his hair.

"I feel better." I give him a nervous smile. "Sorry, I'll go now. I'm sure you have...things to do."

I pull myself up, pushing my weak body into a sitting position. But Rague closes the distance to the bed and positions two pillows behind my back before gently forcing me to lay on them.

"Not going anywhere," he grunts and then disappears behind the door on my right.

I take that time to go to the bathroom. It's not easy to stand up, but I manage awkwardly. My legs are shaking under my weight like I haven't used them in weeks. The wooden floor is cold under my feet, and I use the wall to hold myself up all the way to the bathroom. I relieve myself—going commando strangely ignites a sense of freedom—and then stop in front of the sink. My reflection in the mirror scares the shit out of me. My long hair is a messy, frizzy nest, dirty locks pointing in every direction. The black shadows under my eyes and the huge bruise on my jaw are more noticeable against the paleness of my skin. I look like a sickly ghost—if that's even a thing.

I wash my hands, face, and mouth, and then look around at the nicest and largest bathroom I've ever been in. I'm searching for a brush when I hear noises from the bedroom. Rague suddenly appears on the threshold, and

like a swooning damn damsel at the sight of her hero, my legs buckle. I'd have hit the edge of the sink if Rague hadn't come to my rescue and fucking lifted me up bridal style. Even though I feel like everything is spinning around me I let him know my indignation.

"Put me down, you beast!"

He ignores my words and takes me to bed. And gently, so gently in contrast to his size and strength, he lays me on the mattress and covers my bare legs with the blanket. He puts a tray on my legs.

"Eat. You need to get stronger again," he tells me, crossing his arms like he's expecting me to fight him on this. But he doesn't know me, because I never say no to free food. The fragrant smell of chicken soup tickles my nostrils, and I suddenly realize how hungry I am. I start gulping it down, moaning when I try one of the small pieces of bread floating on the warm soup surface.

Rague stays quiet, sitting in the armchair near the bed. I can feel his piercing eyes on me, following every small movement I make, every emotion appearing on my face.

He must be fucking amazing in bed. Imagine all that intensity on me as his big cock slides inside. He'd know when to go harder, faster, when to go wild and hurt me, when to stop deep inside and grind his heavy balls against my ass, stretching my inner walls with his thickness. How hard to tighten his hand around my throat. He would detect every small change in my gasps, know how badly I want him to grab my ass, spank it, pin me to the mattress, arms over my head, wrists cuffed by his long fingers, his mouth sucking my neck. I enjoy my dirty daydream fantasy so much that the chub under my shirt throbs. Unfortunately, the tray hides it. Or maybe that's

good, since I look like Edward Scissorhands. Rague would probably jerk back if he could read my dirty thoughts right now. Maybe he can.

“Is it some kind of technique to extract information?” I ask cockily.

He just raises an eyebrow.

“Your stare.”

“Guess it’s a family trait,” he responds cryptically.

“Big family?” I don’t know much about him and find myself wanting to.

“Foster family. Six brothers. Two mothers,” he replies with few words, but they say a lot. His biological parents aren’t in the picture. I wish I had the same luck.

“Do you ever get confused when calling your brothers?” I ask curiously. I sometimes confuse Sully with Pink and vice versa. It’s kind of hilarious.

“No.”

“Is Rague your name or a shortened version of it?”

“Raguel.” I can’t stop the snort. And the scowl on his face almost makes me snort again.

“Sorry.” I smother my smile.

“Our foster mother gave us very uncommon names.”

“What are your brothers’?”

“Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Sariel, Michael, and Ramiel.”

“Wow, Raguel doesn’t sound so bad next to Uriel.”

He shrugs.

I don’t know what else to say and go back to the soup.

When I’m full, I place the spoon down on the tray and sheepishly thank him. I left some soup in the bowl and some bread as well. Sully would have loved it. He’s such a bread slut.

“Not a hardship.” Rague grabs the tray and lifts it up

“It’s the best thing I’ve eaten in a long time.”

His jaw ticks at my statement. Did I anger him?

Then a thought pops into my head. “What time is it?”

“Eleven thirty on Wednesday.”

“Wednesday?” I repeat incredulously.

“You were out for almost two days. You need to rest more...”

I’m only half-hearing him because shit! My job. I look around frantically and find my phone on the nightstand next to me, recharging. Did Rague do that?

Where is he? The room is suddenly empty. I go back to my phone and frown at it. I quickly scroll down to find four messages from Ned. He sent three yesterday and one today. I open the last one.

“Fuuuuuk!” I pull on my hair while reading it. *You’re fired*. My gut wrenches, my heart stops, my lungs go on strike.

“What’s wrong?” Rague is now standing next to the bed, but I’m too taken by the dreadful news.

“I lost my job,” I choke out. I feel my eyes burning, and I close them, not wanting him to see me cry.

I can’t postpone my plans once again. I need to get us out of here ASAP. I don’t like how Bill asked about my brother when I met him at Lenny’s gym the other day. I saw how he looked at Sully the few times he came to Dick’s house. He’s a disgusting fucker—heard some puke-inducing story about him and young boys—and I want him fucking far away from Sully. Thank fuck, he’s still away for another ten days. I need to find a solution before he comes back.

“Focus on getting better. I’ll find you something else as soon as you recover.”

“What?” I must have heard him wrong. Did he offer to help me find a job? Instead of answering, he pins me with a dry look that says, “You heard me.”

“Why are you helping me?” I sound puzzled because I fucking am.

“There has to be a reason?” He cocks his head.

“Yes!” In my world nothing is done for nothing. What does he want from me? I know he’s attracted to me—when I’m healthy. Does he want sex? Because I’d do it even if he didn’t help me. I’d suck his spectacular cock again, assume the ass-in-the-air position whenever he wants. The idea alone makes me tremble with anticipation. Fuck knows how much I want to tame that beast...I mean beauty.

Again, there’s definitely something wrong with me. My fixation on Rague is getting out of hand, but nothing new about that.

Still, Rague, with his muscular body, rugged appearance, and don’t-fuck-with-me vibe, could take his pick among hookups. That can’t be the reason behind his help.

“You should take a shower, kitty,” he says matter-of-factly. I open my mouth, ready to keep questioning him because I want answers, but fuck, I do smell. My interrogation intent dies a sudden death.

“Okay, but I can walk,” I throw him a serious look before moving to the edge of the bed. This time, my legs feel stable when I stand up and I walk slowly but dignified enough to the bathroom.

Rague opens the shower stall and turns on the water. Then he stands there in front of me. He doesn’t move. Doesn’t talk. Just keeps staring. I take it as a challenge, and turning my back—and amazing ass—to him, I slowly pull the grey maxi-dress/t-shirt off in one swift move. If he thinks I’ll act like a shy girl, he’ll be sorely disappointed. I slightly bend to leave the garment on the floor, exposing my best asset to him, and I hear a groan. But when I

look back at him, I don't see any difference in his expression. Except his jaw is ticking again.

With a shaky smirk—because this little minx act took a lot out of my weak body—I enter the stall and let the water and soap wash any evidence of the sickness away from my body. I take my time, enjoying a nice shower for once.

When I'm done, Rague is waiting for me. His eyes never move below my neck, what a gentleman—and a douchebag. How can he not peek at all this amazingness? Still, he doesn't.

He pushes off the sink and takes the last couple of steps separating us. He has a big, fluffy towel in his hand and shows it to me with a question in his eyes. Speechless, I nod, and he starts drying off my shoulders and arms, he pauses at the sight of the huge bruise on my side. A low growl rumbles in his chest, but instead of being afraid, I'm turned-on by it.

No one has ever shown me this level of care. It's so damn...intoxicating.

Then he notices the thin, raised skin that forms round burn scars peppering my chest. I stiffen, hands fisted tightly, ready for his next reaction. Rague eyes them with so much unbridled fury that I tense even more.

“Who did this to you?” he hisses, his eyes turning into two endless pools of darkness while he searches mine. I look straight back at him, unable to glance away. But the words are stuck inside my throat, forming a lump. Tears threaten to fall, but I push them back inside. There's anger in his expression, but also worry and...understanding? Fuck, I feel so raw. Like an open, gushing wound. How does he do it? How does he strip me of all my shields?

His eyes are on my pecs again. Is he disgusted by the burns? Just as the thought forms inside my head, Rague drops to his knees. And I'm fucking



lost for words.

“You will tell me,” he declares; his tone is filled with finality.

He then squeezes my hip reassuringly and resumes his task, taking great care in drying off my stomach, dick, and balls. I reach back to grab the shower door to steady myself while my cock gives a tiny jerk, trying to get hard. But my emotions are a twisting mess, and I can hardly breathe having him this close to me, touching me so reverently. He’s treating me with such consideration and gentleness, I’m speechless.

His arms curl around my body to rub the soft towel on my booty. He spends more time than needed on my butt cheeks, and I find myself smiling at his curly head, while enjoying the massage. In this position, he reaches my nose, and I can feel his warm breath on my neck. The warmth of his body radiates into mine.

After drying my legs and feet, Rague tilts his face up from where he kneels; his hands are clenched tightly in the towel. And I see it, for a fleeting moment, the stark need in his dark eyes. I feel like I could drown in it. But then I blink, and he’s standing once again. He quickly dries my hair, and then tosses the towel in the hamper and pushes another jumbo t-shirt over my head. This one is red. Doesn’t hand me any briefs.

When I’m once again lying on the bed, I feel exhausted. Rague gives me two pills to take and then passes me a bottle of sports drink before sitting in the armchair. I start sipping the cold sour liquid and then stop, struck by the realization that I...trust him.

Is it because he saved me from certain death? Took me to his house, kept me warm, called a doctor, and watched over me? And did I thank him for that?

I open my mouth with the intention of doing just that when I notice the small banjo near his feet.

I point at it. "Did you play it while I was sick?"

He nods. I have a vague memory of a certain melody. "Did you play a song by Pink?"

He shrugs. "Maybe."

I give him a large smile. "I could listen to her all the time. I even named our cat after her." Rague's lips twitch at my enthusiasm. "When did you learn?"

I ask, snuggling more comfortably against the pillows.

"My foster mother suggested it when I was a kid. Started with playing the piano, then the guitar. But this little banjo is my favorite."

Wow. "I'm impressed. You must love music."

"Music helps, makes things somehow clear, calm," he explains.

I hum. "It silences not only the noises on the outside, but also the ones inside." My mind goes to Sully and his earphones at night. Man, I miss him, but I'm happy he's away from all this shit.

When I focus on Rague again, he's giving me that intense stare. My dick takes notice, but my body is too drained to move forward.

"Can you play for me again? Whatever you like." My voice sounds soft and hesitant when I ask. His deep, dark eyes look down at the banjo, but he doesn't attempt to grab it. I'm quite certain he will refuse as he stands up. But instead, he lifts the instrument and comes to sit at the foot of the bed, banjo on his lap. One thick leg bent on the sheets, the other down, foot on the ground.

His hands are large, fingers thick and strong, but he holds the instrument gently. I see a reddish tattoo on the inside of his wrist, but the neck of the banjo is in the way, hiding most of it.

When he starts playing, his fingers move effortlessly and gracefully. He plays Jeff Buckley's "Hallelujah." His singing voice is low and deep, gruffer and not as pleasant as the warm timbre he speaks in. But I love it. I feel we're in a judgment-free zone where we can enjoy and just be. So, I hum along. I always liked this song. And it made me wonder more than once if loving someone would actually make me feel that elated and exposed.

Rague's eyes don't move from my face. His watchfulness makes me feel safe somehow. I fall a little harder into my growing fixation with him. A little deeper. I've never felt like this for anyone else. Never thought about anyone as much as I think about him.

He changes to Pink's "Wild Hearts". This is the song I heard him playing while I was sick. This beautifully unguarded, powerful, boldly candid song has helped me overcome many dark moments in my life. It perfectly describes my everyday fight. And Rague's acoustic banjo version is oddly more spectacular than the real one.

I realize that I'm singing. But I'm not only singing, I'm pouring my heart out while he caresses the strings. And something passes between us among the notes. Awareness. Apprehension. The little hairs on my nape bristle as realization strikes.

It's an encounter of mirroring souls.

When his palm halts the trembling strings and the music dies, I'm panting. I feel hollow and so fucking tired, but peaceful. He starts playing a soothing, slow melody I've never heard before. His Adam's apple moves, and his tongue trembles behind his lips as he sings. I feel my eyelids droop. And I fall asleep with my lips curled up in a soft smile.

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## Chapter 7

### *RAGUEL*

Five mornings later, I'm walking out of my bathroom when I hear singing down the hall. Ollie is belting out, though I can't identify the song. He's quite terrible at it, dog-howling terrible, but he doesn't seem to care.

Every night he asks me to play. He told me about his brother and their music ritual at bedtime, and how he only upgraded it to a live show with me. He really enjoys me playing, I can see it clearly in the small contented smile caressing his lips when he drifts off. Pink songs seem to be his favorite, but he likes whatever I strum.

I'm getting used to having him here. I've been living alone since I was eighteen, so it's weird to have to share my space with somebody else. But I want Ollie where I can keep an eye on him. I can't stop picturing him shivering violently, half frozen, looking miserable and defenseless. Even though barely standing and almost delirious, he gave such a relieved smile when I found him walking down the road leading to my house. He said he

can't remember how he got here; his feverish brain must have guided him to me, urged by an instinct of self-preservation. And fuck, if I don't like the thought that he unconsciously associates being safe with me.

It doesn't matter that he had nowhere else to go the fact that he came to me gives my heart a bizarre palpitation. But if I think about the state in which I found him, I'm tempted to break stuff. He fainted in my fucking arms, overwhelmed by fever. I quickly took him home, and while Michael checked on him, I took off Ollie's flimsy, wet clothes—they were even damp on the inside. His skin looked as pale and cold as the snow coming down on Chicago, and his breathing was shallow and fast.

If that wasn't enough, I realized how bone-deep and severe his cold was when he started shivering once again during the night. Enveloping him with my naked body was the only thing I could do.

What if he hadn't come to me? He could have gotten worse.

He said that his damn father kicked him out after Ollie told him to cancel the fight against Scorpion. That bastard left him in the cold with a too-thin jacket and the flu. I'd like to return the favor very much with my boot into his skull. That reminds me I have another fight at the factory tonight. I'll slip out while Ollie is sleeping. Don't want him near the illegal ring or his father anymore.

The sound of a glass-shattering, high-pitched cackly note jars me. Ollie is still singing horribly, and the first hint of a smile lifts one corner of my mouth. It takes me a few seconds to locate him in the kitchen. And I stop dead at the sight of him.

He looks so damn happy and carefree as he moves around, synchronizing his movements with the music in his head. I cross my arms over my chest and lean against the open doorway, feeling my smile grow as I watch Ollie

rolling his narrow waist and shaking his gorgeous ass. He's much smaller than me, but the energy he exudes is vibrant, alive, and captivating. I can't look away.

He's wearing one of my flannel shirts that fits him like a dress, reaching his knees, with a brown belt tied around his hips in an odd knot. He's ridiculously adorable and sexy. Almost as hot as when I dried him off the other day. The control I mastered that time shocked the fuck out of me. But I would never take advantage of him when he's that vulnerable. Those damn bruises, they were not from a fight, too new in opposition to the burns on his chest. Those looked old but still fucking painful. I didn't push him to tell him the name of the fuckers who dared touch him, because I know how hard it is to go back to those hurtful memories. But I still want to go on a killing spree of all the people who ever hurt him. And I expect him to tell me who they are...sooner rather than later.

His black locks are loose on his shoulders, and I get a peek at those thick lashes and the outline of his lips every time he grabs something from the fridge.

*How could I ever mistaken him for a minor?*

He turns toward the counter to grab the plates, facing the open doorway and me. A startled yelp escapes him, and he jumps back so violently that he grunts, hitting his ass on the lower cabinets. I purse my lips, trying to stop the laughter from coming out, but I can't. I didn't mean to scare him so horribly, but the expression on his face is...comical.

Ollie looks outraged at first, but then a big, warm smile forms on his lips.

"You should do it more," he says as I sober up.

"Scare you to death?" I ask with a raised brow.



“Laugh. You have a very sexy one.” He looks at me from behind his lashes and fuck he’s so beautiful.

His smiling eyes are shining almost secretively, like he’s hiding a whole world behind them. And I suddenly want to know all of his mysteries.

Silence settles over the room as he shoves one hand through his long hair, pushing it back from where it fell over his cheeks. Then he grabs the plates and turns his back on me once again.

I walk up next to him to grab two mugs and pour some coffee in them.

“How do you take yours?” I ask.

“Sugar and milk, please,” he says without looking up. He seems very focused on making our breakfast.

I prepare the coffee, mine black and bitter, and place them on the table near the kitchen, taking a seat in one of the chairs. I take a sip of the warm drink, softly moaning at how strong Ollie made it. He joins me soon after, setting a plate with two sandwiches in front of me before sitting on the chair next to mine with his own breakfast.

I grunt at the delicious smell of toasted bread, eggs, and bacon, and demolish the sandwiches quickly under Ollie’s pleased smile. He even gives me half of his, and I’m only happy not to waste food.

“How do you feel?” I ask him when my stomach is full.

“So much better. Thank you by the way. For all you’ve done.” He averts his eyes. The blush on his cheeks gives away his embarrassment. Further confirmation of the fact that he isn’t used to people doing things for him.

“No need.”

“Yes, need; don’t know where I would be if you hadn’t find me.” His gaze gets lost for a few seconds, but then a mischievous smirk paints his lips.

“Probably would have ended up doing something stupid.”

The thought fucking angers me. But he chuckles softly while shaking his head, and the sudden happy sounds soothe my mercurial temper.

“Sorry. Didn’t mean to upset you. Although I really enjoy your growly attitude.”

I sigh, puzzled by my response to him. From the fucking beginning he unsettled me. His fearless behavior, the boldness in his words, and the vulnerability he carries around in his eyes, which he tries so hard to hide behind his cockiness. He’s unpredictable, broken into so many parts that he somehow put back together again, creating a disarming, unique, fucking beautiful human being.

“You’re wearing my shirt.”

His hand smooths down the fabric. “Yes. I hope you don’t mind me rifling around your closet. It’s cold as balls, beastie. And I can’t find the clothes I came here in.”

He means the few old Cinderella-rags he owns. And fuck no, I don’t mind if the result is this hot.

“They’re in the laundry room. But I threw away the vest.”

“What? Why?” he hisses.

“It was falling apart. I’ll buy you a new one.” I shrug.

“I don’t need you to buy me stuff!” He huffs indignantly.

“Good ’coz you look cute like this, kitty.” I cover my smile, sipping from my mug.

“Cute?” He scrunches up his nose like I offended him. “And stop calling me kitty, beast!”

*Never.* “I like you in my clothes,” I confess. Actually, I fucking love it. Our scents are mixed when he wears them. And the combination is like a damn

drug. More, the thought of other people smelling me on him makes me so damn smug and fucking horny.

His face has turned red, making him look young and almost angelic. *Almost*. His snarky attitude belongs more to a feisty demon than an angel.

I take pity on him and change the subject. “You should make four more sandwiches.”

“Wow, I know you’re big, but how much energy does your body need?”

“Two are for you.” When he frowns, I keep going, “I found you a job if you’re interested.”

He springs up on his chair, eyes filled with interest. “You did?”

“There’s a building in need of being torn down, and I need an extra hand. Interested?”

He opens and closes his mouth.

“I own a construction and demolition company,” I explain, but he still just stares at me, almost in shock. Then he jumps off his chair and wraps his arms around my shoulders. I stiffen at the feel of his hands near my neck, dangerously close to my scars.

But before I can react, he pulls back with a beaming smile plastered on his face—the one with the brackets at the corners of his mouth. And all the uneasiness is washed away.

“Does offering you a job make your brain faulty?” I tease him, using a serious tone.

He puffs his cheeks and then mumbles something about a stupid beast with a huge zucchini, and I, Raguel Carver, have to stifle another laugh. The last time I fully chuckled was months ago when Rami dropped one of his hot beverages on Gabe’s crouch. The sight of my stick-in-the-ass brother

walking out of the café looking like he pissed his pants was too hilarious to resist. That was a once in a blue moon occurrence.

But Ollie pulls smiles and laughs out of me like confetti. And my obsession with him is growing exponentially.

“I need to get changed...into my clothes before we go.”

“Keep my flannel shirt on. It’s warm and will protect your skin. I should have a pair of boots that fit you by the entryway; your sneakers are not good for the job site.” I don’t tell him that I bought them especially for him, since he doesn’t seem to like that.

He nods while bringing the plates to the kitchen.

I watch the man as he hums one of the songs I played for him yesterday—I think. My eyes drop down to his bare legs. They have some hair, but are mostly smooth. The red flannel shirt is covering his ass, but I can see the generous curve pushing against the fabric. *Fuck, I want inside that.* He looks back over his shoulder and finds my attention on his butt. He drags his bottom lip through his teeth and makes a deep, low sound in his throat that talks directly to my cock. I see goosebumps popping up on the back of his neck as he glances at the growing bulge in my jeans.

Work first. Make him milk my cock second.

I smile again when I hear him mumble, “Cute kitty, my perfect ass.”



We get inside my white work pickup with the sign *Carver Construction and Demolition* and the roaring bear logo on the side.

“Seatbelt,” I command, clicking mine in.

“Bossy beast,” he mutters, but does as I say. I’d like to show him how much I can be bossy shoving my cock down his throat. Instead, I shove the shifter into drive and make my way down the driveway. The sun is high and warm, it’s a beautiful winter day.

I find my favorite podcast on my phone, it’s about the random world we live in and the amazing facts that are complete nonsense. That gets me an amused glance from Ollie.

He taps gently on the button on the car door before pressing it down, allowing some of the cold air to flow in through the half-open window. Strands from his high ponytail moved gently in the breeze. He sticks his hand out, letting the air stream between his elegant fingers.

“This area is...quiet,” he says, looking at the nature surrounding us. Something flashes through his gaze too fast for me to interpret, but it looked like...longing. “Is that why you chose to live here?”

I nod. No obnoxious neighbors to deal with. “The land was cheap since the house was falling apart.”

“Wait, you renovated it, didn’t you?”

“It’s my job.”

“You’re also very good at it. Seriously, it’s annoying that you’re so skilled.”

He should see what I can do to a donor with a knife and a hammer.

“I could teach you. It’s not so hard to learn,” I offer.

His fingers toy with the hem of my bomber jacket which swallows him whole. He’s nervously biting his lower lip, looking straight ahead.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to. We can find something you like more.”

“We?” he whispers softly, turning those bright eyes on me. He goes from sassy to unguardedly insecure in the next second. It’s disconcerting and sets off my protective instincts.

Ignoring his question I ask, “What would you like to do?”

“Mmm, I took a few classes at the community college in business and management.”

I knew that already. It’s written in the file Rami gave to me. “Why did you stop?”

He purses his lips. “Life.” His hands are balled up on his lap, and I can almost feel the anger rolling out of him. I recognize that feeling very well. Today’s job will help him with it.

He doesn’t say anything else, and I try to focus on the drive but almost take the wrong turn. I can’t help but glance at him. My hand is gripping the gearshift, fingers squeezing tightly.

The minutes pass, and after driving through the last stoplights on the street, I make the final turn, coming to a stop outside of a big warehouse in the gentrified neighborhood.

I turn off the ignition, and we both climb out of the pickup.

He's studying the big, red, three-story building while we walk toward the main entrance.

"What kind of warehouse is it?"

I pull a key out of my jacket and open one of the loading dock doors.

"It was used to store pencils, but after the factory closed many years ago, it just remained empty." I easily push the shutter all the way up, reminding myself I need to change them out with electrical ones.

"So, what does the owner want to do with it now?" He seems really curious about it.

"A library slash café." We step through the dock door and walk inside a large space. Big tall windows take up almost all the walls, there are large columns on each side of the room, and the ceiling is covered in pipes and metal beams. There are some old, empty crates on one side, a table with the blueprints of the building, and some tools we will need for the renovation.

"That sounds like a lot of work." He whistles, looking around at the dusty, bare room. "But it's a good investment."

I want to smile at the confidence filling his words. Uri said the same thing. He's given me some pointers since he opened quite a few restaurants.

Ollie nods as he talks. "This area is improving quickly; opening a new business around here will definitely provide some profit."

"I hope so, since the building is mine."

His head snaps my way, like my statement caught him by surprise.

"Yours?" But he seems to shake the shock off quickly. "Then I can't slack on the job, can I?"

"Why, did you intend to slack off?" I give him a severe stare that usually makes people take a step back, but he just snorts. *Snorts!*

Making a slow spin to take the whole room in, he sees the old shutter lift at the far end. “How many floors up?”

“Two more. The building is in good condition. The foundation is solid. I just need to change a few things and check some others. But the result could be better than I anticipated.”

“Oh, I can clearly see that.”

The area around the warehouse is kind of residential. But the main street has a few shops and business establishments, and there’s a university four blocks away, which guarantees starving customers at all hours of the day and evening.

I suddenly feel excited about it. I bought this building as an investment, sure, but the truth is that I like renovating places. It keeps my mind and body busy. Apart from my house, I usually do it for other people. Here, I have carte blanche and can work however I like. It’s kind of freeing.

“Where do you want me?” His words would sound pretty innocent if he didn’t smirk knowingly at me. Such a sassy little thing.

I smother my smile. “Grab a pair of gloves from the table and put them on. I want to knock down that partition wall, but we need to move all that crap on the other side of the room first.” I point at the old cardboard, pieces of metal, and crates along the wall.

Ollie takes off my bomber jacket and the flannel shirt before putting on the gloves. He’s now wearing only his pink tank top and his jeans, and his back muscles ripple through the fabric as he starts to pick up boxes and carry them across the room. Some of those crates, even though empty, weigh a lot, but he lifts them without complaint. He’s completely recovered, and relief settles inside of me at the thought.



Soon, his skin is glistening with a layer of sweat, and the long dark locks that escaped the ponytail look damp near the hairline. It's not his angular jaw that makes him look tough and weathered, it's more a vibe coming off of him. Like his feisty attitude was hard-earned by a rough life.

He used to work at the recycling plant near West Garfield Park—a legit operation. He could have found a shady job—God knows his father could have easily hooked him up—they definitely pay more than loading fertilizer bags on the back of a truck. Ollie chose the hard way, which kept him strong. All of that lifting certainly helped him maintain all that lean muscle. He's a work of art.

I watch him as he works, while I do the same at a slower pace, too intent on checking on him. I feel his eyes on my body at times, and I flex my biceps and tighten my pecs under my tight t-shirt just to give him a better show.

After a while, we are done, and I push a yellow helmet on his head and tell him to wear the flannel shirt again. Splinters and pieces of plaster could cut his skin when we start tearing down the wall.

“Grab the sledgehammer,” I tell him. But he doesn't make a move. He just stares at the tools lined up on the table.

“The big-ass hammer with the long grey handle and flat head,” I deadpan, wiping some sweat from my forehead.

He lifts it, one hand rubbing the black metal head. “This reminds me of something,” he says, glancing at my groin. I sigh loudly, pretending not to be affected by his flirty words. If he keeps teasing me like this, my hammer will definitely give his hole a pounding.

I hand him a pair of goggles and push mine into my back pocket. I take the electric jackhammer with one hand and a thirty-six-inch crowbar with the other, and walk to the long partition wall as Ollie follows.

“This all has to come down. The café’s back kitchen will be here, and the counter there.” I point while he listens with interest. “Go at it.”

“Just like that? No instructions?”

“Hit as hard as you can.”

He smiles. I can see he’s eager to start, and who wouldn’t be at the prospect of breaking shit?

He grabs the long handle, and bending his knees slightly, he swings the hammer’s head in the air until it hits the surface hard. The loud noise of metal going through drywall makes me smile. It’s a damn familiar sound.

A sledgehammer to a wall, while very impressive to watch, is utterly unnecessary for wall surfaces. It can easily do damage to plumbing and electrical lines. But this partition wall has none of that, and a big-ass tool hitting a hard panel is almost therapeutic in a way—without all the useless talking about your feelings. And a damn good workout.

Ollie keeps going at it, nonstop. A pile of debris forms at his feet pretty quickly, but he doesn’t stop. His swings turn almost savage, pieces of wall are flying around him. He’s reached the wooden framing inside and yanks the hammer out of it by placing his foot on the wall and pulling. Then he moves a little and goes at it again. Like he’s not only hitting a wall, but venting all his fury on it. And there’s a lot of it.

I can see how he needs it, to let the dark feelings out. Keeping them inside only makes them fester and grow. I know that well.

I put down my tools and silently watch him, waiting for him to stop. And when it happens, droplets of sweat are rolling down his face and neck. He’s panting. The hammer slips from his hand and lands on the concrete floor with a clang. He yanks off the gloves and then the flannel shirt and tank top,

as if the fabric's keeping him from breathing. His damp, bare chest is heaving, gaze on the four large holes in the still-standing wall.

When he turns his eyes on me, they are so full of fire I feel my skin burning, just before he swears and closes the distance between us. He wraps an arm around my waist, holding my hip with his hand and moves his lips toward mine.

But I jerk back. Old habits die hard.

"The no kissing rule is revived?" He begins stroking his dick against my very hard one, not the least bit discouraged by my rejection.

"I..." I start, but he cuts me off.

"It's okay, we can practice another time. Even though you don't need the practice," he moans.

"Yeah?" My lust-filled brain is becoming foggy.

"You sound like you've never kissed before." He snorts. And he must read something on my face, because the leg wrapped around my hip stiffens and his hips halt their humping movement.

"Was I your first kiss?" *Do I detect pleasure in his voice at the prospect?*

But no, he wasn't my first kiss. "I haven't done it in a long time."

"Why?"

"Too intimate. I fuck. That's it. The less touching, the better." The guys I pay are just a warm hole I can get pleasure from.

The hand on my hip squeezes before reluctantly dropping away. He's about to slide his arm from around me when I grab his ass and plaster him to me.

I can see the question in his light-green, surprised eyes before he expresses it in words "Why me?"

*Because you're fucking mine.* I want to say it, but the wariness on his face stops me.

“It was an exchange, if I remember correctly.”

He smirks. “Well, I prepared lunch...don’t I deserve something?”

I feel a genuine smile tilting my lips, showing my teeth. He stares at it in awe. He looks breathless while looking at me, and not because of the physical exercise.

“Where did all the air go?” he mumbles.

Unable to resist anymore, I mold his ass into my hands and crush my mouth to his. And it’s just like the first time it happened. His tongue spears inside, twisting against mine. His taste is my new addiction, the way he wants me, his desire for me. He doesn’t hide it, quite the opposite when feverishly humping my cock.

He bites my lower lip, not letting go and sinking his teeth in just like he did in the parking lot. It fucking stings, and I want to fuck him right here against the damn wall.

His hands are both on my back now, sliding under my t-shirt, soothingly brushing along my scars, and I don’t feel the need to remove them. I’m too taken by his lips devouring mine. I grip his jaw and pull his mouth open before deepening the kiss.

He breaks it off. “Fuck me.” There’s pleading in his moan, and desperation mixed with determination in his eyes. I can’t fucking resist that. We kiss again, and while one of Ollie’s hands slides down to open his jeans, the other trails up toward my neck. I grab it before it touches my head and flip him, face to the wall.

“Don’t move,” I growl. He kicks his boots aside so that I can pull his pants all the way off. His boxers as well.

“Don’t like to see these on you,” I snarl, throwing the offending garment on the pile of debris. He replies with a haughty sniff, but places his hands

firmly in front of him and bends forward, so that his cheek is touching the wall.

Fuuuck! The sight of his round, firm ass is glorious. I give a plump cheek a nice hard spank. The jiggling motion and redness marking his skin brings a sense of satisfaction, like I'm claiming it as mine. The cry that leaves his mouth is so damn dirty. It makes me crazy horny.

I unzip my pants and take out my aching cock, giving it two slow pumps and spreading the precum on the hard length. My balls are boiling hot, and the red head of my dick drips, eager to ram his tight hole.

"If you're changing your mind, I'll be really pissed!" Ollie suddenly says when I just keep staring. Reaching down, I grab that perky ass of his in my large hand and give the soft flesh a hard, merciless squeeze. I move a cheek aside to have a first look at his puckered hole.

A rumble of approval vibrates in my chest. "Nothing. Not a fucking thing's keeping me from this ass."

I grab the packet of lube from the back of my jeans—I bought a box of them the day after Ollie kissed me. I open it and coat my fingers, but before using them to loosen his entrance, I order Ollie to turn his face my way. His cheeks are red, eyes half-lidded. A possessive feeling overwhelms me. I want him to watch.

"Wha...?" His words are lost in a gasp when I open my mouth and let my saliva fall on his ass. It drops between his cheeks and then slides down, coating his crack and hole. Ollie shivers and lets out a whimper. I needed to see something of mine on him. It's a weird, dominating thought. And I don't give a fuck. I need more. I spit on his hole and spread the wetness just before thrusting two lube-slick fingers all the way inside him.

“Fuck!” Ollie cries, arching beautifully toward the ceiling. He pushes against me, impaling himself even more on my fingers. I start fucking him with them, and he bucks his hips with every pump of my hand.

I’ve never prepped someone before, the guys from the agency are ready to be fucked when I meet them, unless I’m in the mood to watch and they do it in front of me. I didn’t know how much I was missing. Ollie is so damn tight and hot around my fingers. As I add another one, I can feel him stretching, his hole getting loose under my thrusts. I want it swollen and gaping and dripping with cum.

“My cock is a thick motherfucker, I need to open you up,” I tell him, sliding a fourth finger inside. He hisses, but doesn’t stop driving back onto them.

“No, you don’t. I like it when it hurts. Give me your cock.” It’s more an order than a plea. But I let it slide. He’ll learn soon enough who’s in charge when we fuck. “And take off your t-shirt. Want to see those gorgeous pecs.” I pull my fingers out and yank off my shirt, not because he told me to, but because I want to feel him against me. Skin to skin.

“You’re fucking gaping. Jesus, what a sight.” I grab the condom from my wallet, and while putting it on, I tell him, “Later, we’ll go get tested. I want to stuff you with cum next time I take your ass.”

“You’re so sure there’ll be a next time?” he retorts but doesn’t argue.

I slide my length between his cheeks to spread lube on it. They cradle it perfectly; it feels damn good.

“You’ll fucking beg for my cock. Every single time.”

He opens his mouth to reply, but I graze the puckered bundle of nerves, making him shudder. My balls rub against his soft skin.

“I won’t be gentle. I’ll use you like a tight fuck toy. Last chance to back out, kitty.”

“Fuck yeah, give it to me. Use me.” He sounds desperate, and damn, I love this slutty look on him. Ass out, legs spread wide, hands balled up against the wall.

I line up my cock, grab his hip hard, and push. The head inches inside him and starts to stretch his wet, strangling walls before stretching them some more.

His need is obvious in the tremble that races across his shoulders and his shaky legs.

“So fucking tight,” I grit out while driving my dick into the hottest channel I’ve ever entered. I told him I’m merciless when fucking, but oddly, I’m trying to slow down. Where I’m finding this control is a mystery to me.

“All in?” he chokes out.

“Halfway.”

He gasps. “Oh, God.”

“Your greedy hole will be stuffed full like never before,” I groan.

“Your giant cock will be milked like never before,” he counters. And I fucking believe him.

Talking is something else I don’t do when I’m fucking. But with Ollie, I can’t keep all the filthy things passing through my mind inside.

“Kiss me,” his voice is a soft whisper, and I can’t deny him what he wants.

“Keep your hands on the wall.” I wrap my fingers around his neck and pull him up, his back against my front. He sucks on my tongue and rolls his hips, crying out when I impale him all the way on my cock with a growl.

Fuuuucking finally. His inner walls are squeezing me so tight, my balls are already aching with the need to come. What will it feel like without anything between us? The thought of being bare inside him, of fucking him raw ignites something dark and primal inside me. I start to ram into him,

not giving him time to adjust to me. I told him I fuck like a maniac, and now it's time for him to take it.

My mind has shut off and my body has taken the wheel. My cock is setting all my nerves alight. I pound into him hard and fast, balls slapping against his bouncing ass, all that soft flesh jiggling under my ruthless onslaught. I want to cover it in cum and watch my seed trail down his smooth skin.

The wet sucking sound of our fucking resounds in the large space, combined with his loud moans and my deep grunts.

"You take it so fucking well," I snarl the praise in his ear, tightening my fingers around his throat. He clenches around my cock, making precum spurt. "How much do you like being used?"

He moans as I let go of his neck and grab his wrists. I pull his arms all the way back, jolting his body against me as I slam my cock inside him. He's moving like a rag doll while I punch my hips forward, and he lets out a strangled cry when I quicken my thrusts.

"Don't stop." Ollie seems to have lost control as he starts to desperately chase his own release. Fucking himself on my dick and biting angrily on his lip.

"Let me hear how much you like the biggest cock you've ever taken loosening you up."

"Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck." Ollie rears his hips back and pounds frantically onto me, his eyes rolling into the back of his head like he's never felt anything so good, so consuming in his life. Goddammit, neither have I.

I fall forward, taking him with me. His shoulder blades are flush against my sweaty chest, his hands and forearms on the wall. He writhes while I use my grip on his nape to hold him down and jackhammer into him.



“You asked for it, didn’t you? You wanted to be fucked so damn badly.” His hole tightens around my cock. Fuck yeah!

“Can’t help it if I know what I want,” he chokes out, and my nostrils flare like they do when I’m turned on real good—or ready to fucking annihilate someone.

“And what do you want?”

“You-you using me until I come, so hard I can’t remember my own name,” he screams.

“Oh, you’ll remember.” I ram my ten inches up his ass so damn roughly that I push him onto the tips of his toes. It must be uncomfortable, but what does he do? He moans like a whore. He’s damn tight and welcoming. I need to fuck this hole again and again until it gets so damn loose, my dick will slide in without lube, only my spit.

“Every step you take, you’ll feel the sore imprint my fat cock left inside of you,” I whisper, pushing his chest further down so that his ass presses more firmly against my pistoning dick. “You’ll feel the urge to fill the emptiness so much, you’ll come back for more. And I will give it to you. I’ll fill all your holes till my balls are drained and aching.”

“And I’ll massage them with my tongue until they are full again and ready to unload inside my throat.”

It isn’t just his body that was created to fit me, his filthy little mind complements mine, as well. He’s perfection.

“Fuck, it’s so big I can feel it in my guts. More. Let it all out on my ass.” He turns his head. His pupils blow wider, nearly obscuring the light green color of his eyes. His mouth hangs open, tongue out as he aims a pleasure-drunk look at me. And I wish I had another dick to stuff his mouth with.

His hand is jerking his dick frantically, almost following the pitiless and unrelenting rhythm of my thrusts.

“You fill me so good, so good. Ahhhh!” he lets out a long loud cry and starts convulsing. His channel is contracting around my cock, so tightly I feel the telltale sign in my balls just before cum erupts from my slit.

I push all the way in, yanking his hips toward me with both hands and holding them still. His hole spasms, sucking me dry, and I grunt and groan all my pleasure to the heavens with my head tilted upward. I feel his knees buckling, so I wrap my arm around his waist while unloading inside him. Sex has never been like this. Ever.

He shivers against me and nips my arm before I feel the warm flick of his tongue. My dick twitches, still hard, and I think about bending him forward again and continuing to fuck him.

My hips move of their own volition, going back and forth. He sucks me in every time I pump.

I lean back to look at how his used hole stretches around me. It’s a vision. I have to spread his plump cheeks to get a better view, and Jesus Christ, the only word inside my head is *mine*. My softening cock gives a twitch before slipping out. His entrance is red, puffy, and fucking loose.

Ollie grunts while I’m smiling smugly at it. I wish I could see my cum rolling out. Next time, I tell myself. The urge to push my fingers inside him and fill him up, to feel his walls squeezing around me while claiming his asshole once again hits me. But he beats me to it. Still slightly bent at the waist, he reaches his arm back, stuffs three fingers inside, and sighs with relief.

Fucking hell, my cock is coming alive again, and with the used condom around it, it’s so damn uncomfortable. I quickly get rid of it, throwing it into

a bucket, while keeping my eyes on the dirty show Ollie is giving me, moaning while fucking himself on his fingers.

After another minute, he sighs contentedly, pulls his fingers out, and turning around, he slumps against the wall. The satisfied sound hits my chest like a mean hook.

“I needed that.” He smiles, his naked body on display. I can’t help but stare, gawking at all those inches of beautiful, sweaty skin before me. The hungry, fascinated way he’s looking at my bare chest and limp dick is inebriating. Like he can’t believe I’m here in front of him.

I grab his jaw and give him an open-mouthed, sloppy kiss. He responds to the aggression quickly and easily. His warm lips are what dreams are made of. Even more red, shiny, and swollen after I part from them.

He laughs happily. “That was incredible,” he says, and I grunt in agreement. “Feel free to use that beauty on me whenever you want, Rague.”

His words make my lips twitch, and my cock half-chubs while still out and hanging. He grabs it with his hand and starts pumping it. “How about coming down my throat this time?” He offers sultrily, already sliding down to his knees.

He pushes his arms behind his back and takes me in his mouth, sucking hard while my dick grows rapidly in the hot, wet cavern. Both my hands fist his hair, and once again, I give his throat a pounding.

Ollie doesn’t know it yet, but this is only the beginning. I’ll never let him leave. I will protect whatever this *incredible* thing is between us with my life.



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## Chapter 8

*OLIVER*

The warm water is cascading down my body in the ridiculously large shower. My muscles ache after spending an entire morning knocking down walls and cleaning up the mess. But I feel good.

I'm used to the physical labor at the recycling plant, but that's a repetitive job, while working with Rague is actually interesting and diversified. He taught me how to use a crowbar on wall surfaces—poking a hole with the round side, then ripping it down with the hook. He showed me where to expect the wiring and plumbing, and how to avoid doing any real damage.

I really enjoyed being part of Rague's library café project. Listening to him describe his plans has been kind of exciting. So much so that I couldn't stop asking him about it. I almost suggested a couple of ideas for the upper floors, but stopped myself. The fact that we fucked doesn't automatically make us pals. Right?

But boy, can the man give a spectacular pounding to both my holes. The perfect feel of pleasure and pain. One word from him, and I'll be ready, bent over the nearest surface, waiting for him to rail me. My hardening dick is totally on board with it, and although very sore, my ass keeps clenching around nothing. But I do like to feel the burn, it reminds me how it came to be.

Still can't believe I begged him to fuck me. I mean, I'm obviously attracted to him, but I've never needed to be taken so badly before. Something in me just snapped. One minute, I was deeply enjoying making holes in a wall, and the next, it was my father I saw under the hammer. Him and his disgusting friends and all the things they forced me to witness. It was like going down the fucking rabbit hole. I just couldn't stop hitting them, giving them what they deserve and more. When my arms couldn't hold the heavy hammer anymore, I turned and saw Rague staring at me. There was no judgment in his eyes, only utter understanding. And I felt the sudden urge to let him use me, to let him break me even more. To forget who I was for a few minutes. I needed him to fuck all those dark emotions out of me. To purge me of my sins with his huge cock.

And he fucking delivered.

A shudder runs down my spine at the memory. I turn off the water, and getting out of the stall, I start drying myself. The towel moves over the small Band-Aid on the inside of my forearm where the syringe made a small hole. In the afternoon, we went to a clinic to get tested—just as Rague wanted. We got the results pretty fast—he knows someone who works there.

Both negative. Another shudder. Which means that next time, I'll feel his cum splashing inside me, filling me to the brim. He was surprised I didn't

make a fuss about going to the clinic. I snorted. Of course, I fucking didn't, since I've turned into a cockslut for him. He gave me the best fuck of my life; I can't even imagine how amazing it will be with nothing between us.

I put on a pair of briefs and the long-sleeve shirt Rague left on the bed in the guest room—my room, but for how long? Every time I've suggested leaving, he's growled and muttered that I need to rest more. But I'm fully recovered now. Rague only made me work a half-day, but I'm sure he wouldn't have fucked me if I wasn't.

I need to go back to Dick's at some point. He's sending me a text everyday with the countdown of the days left to the fight against Scorpion. My brother will be back soon, and I have no other choice but to do Dick's bidding once again. Even though the thought makes my stomach lurch.

It would be so nice to stay here indefinitely. I briefly envision sleepy mornings with wild, rough sex, going to work together, and then falling asleep with Rague's melodic voice every single night. Maybe even sharing the same bed. A warm pressure coils in my chest at the thought of having such a nice life. A damn fucking fairy tale. And those don't exist. Not for me, a good-for-nothing from the slums.

I let the dream go while I make my way to the kitchen, rolling the too-long sleeves up my arms. My legs are bare from my knees down, but I'm fine. This house is always warm.

Rustic-modern on the inside as well as the outside, the place oozes peace. It's a real home. There's a stone fireplace in the living room. A brown, well-worn leather sofa, which would be a perfect reading spot—I can clearly see Sully all curled up and comfy while I watch a movie on the TV on the long sideboard. The soft, colorful quilt laying on the ottoman, delicate watercolor paintings on the walls, and nice tablecloth on the dining table

hint at a feminine touch. Cliché, I know. A man or even Rague himself could actually be into all those things, but from what I know about him, it's unlikely. I decide to give him the benefit of the doubt, mainly because I don't fucking like the idea of an ex choosing stuff for his house.

On the left, the view of silent nature from the sliding glass doors that leads outside is breathtaking—there's an outdoor fire pit, which I'm dying to use. During the day, the sunlight floods the entire room, showing the high ceilings and wooden beams and the airy kitchen, which is open to the living area.

It smells so good. Calming. An earthy scent, mixed with Rague's musk, wind, and rain. I take a deep breath, filling my lungs and reluctantly letting the exquisite scent go.

Rague is nowhere to be seen, probably taking one of his work calls in his office. I learned he's the sole owner of his company and has quite a few people working for him. He also doesn't like to delegate, but he did a bit of that while I was sick, and I'm grateful. For everything he's done so far, really.

That's why I want to pay him back somehow. Money is out of the question. I don't have much, and I need every last penny I've got. So, dinner it is. I'm not very experienced with cooking. But Lori's grandma taught me a couple of dishes growing up, and I think I can recreate them. I check his fridge and cupboard. I need to make tortillas from scratch, but I think Rague would enjoy a hot, fragrant platter of enchiladas and a small strawberry cheesecake.

I wash my hands at the deep sink in the kitchen, which is a chef's dream. The expensive-looking appliances are plentiful and spread around on the vast gleaming marble counter, all of them either chrome or black, including



the massive stainless fridge and the coffee machine. The cabinets are sleek and modern in various shades of grey. Pots hang on a wooden rack over the large island in the middle of the red cotto-tile floor. Over the space, a warm glow spreads from a trio of pendent lights hanging above the island. A little on the left, there's a large enough table to seat six people—maybe five comfortably.

An hour and a half later, the cheesecake is in the fridge and I'm sliding the tray of enchiladas into the oven. Taking the timer with me, I go looking for Rague. His office is empty. A laptop is recharging on his desk.

I turn back to the hallway and still, trying to detect any kind of sound. There, from the last door on the left—the gym. The sight that awaits me comes straight from one of my filthiest dreams.

Rague is standing in the middle of the room, lifting weights. His sweatpants are hanging dangerously low on his waist, showing off his ripped stomach and the drool-worthy, perfect vee of his muscles. Dark hair peeks above the waistband—no manscaping for the beastie; he's lucky I like the wildness of it. Swallowing the saliva that fills my mouth, my eyes trail down to the mouthwatering shape of his soft, but still huge dick through his sweats. I sucked that beauty a few hours ago, the burning corners of my mouth are solid proof of that, and yet, I crave the taste of it filling my mouth again.

My gaze moves up to ogle his muscular chest, gleaming with sweat. The shiny smattering of dark hair looks soft; I wish he'd let me touch it. His pecs flex and biceps bulge every time he bends his arms toward his chest. He has perfectly round dark nipples I want to suck and bite, a strong neck and jaw. The silky, curly hair on his head softens those large lips and big, important nose. The man is gorgeous. He doesn't even have to dress to impress. Actually, in his case, less is more.

The filth my mind suggests is like a tsunami, impossible to stop no matter how much I try. Not that I try that much.

The man lets out a low grunt of effort as he lifts the weights one last time before placing them on the rack.

“Will you train at some point or are you going to keep watching?” He doesn’t sound bothered by my gawking. And I don’t care he caught me staring since I made it very clear I want him.

I feign pondering, tapping my finger to the reddened skin on my chin caused by his rough stubble. His eyes zero in on it. He likes to see his marks on me; I know because I found him peering at them more than once today.

I feel an inner evil and very slutty smile coming out while I decide to tempt him more. I trail my hand down my neck where faint bruises are visible, made by his fingers when they tightened and pressed against the skin. His gaze darkens even more, but also a small frown appears on his face.

I lift the timer I’m holding to show him how much I have. “Twenty-five minutes.” My ass tightens when I think about what we could do in those twenty-five minutes.

“And then?”

“I’ll turn into the *girl* in rags, poor and lowly.” I look down at myself.

“Nope, still in rags, the magic didn’t work this time,” I joke.

His eyes slide down my barely clothed body. His frown deepens. “We can go buy clothes tomorrow.”

Fuck. He sounds serious. “That’s not what...it was a joke.”

“Didn’t sound like one. Don’t like when you denigrate yourself.”

That’s damn sweet, and I love it, scarily so. I want more of it. So needy.

But it's not what I had in mind when I started this. The words tumble chaotically in my mind. I struggle to arrange them in a sequence, even an incorrect one. Why am I assaulted by these moments of awkwardness around Rague?

"I have fifteen more minutes, why don't you join me?" His voice penetrates my useless brain, and I'm only able to nod. I place the timer on the floor and fall to my knees on a yoga mat. I feel energized all of a sudden.

Keeping my back straight, I move through my typical stretches, using some yoga poses Lori taught me. I start with a hero pose, to stretch my chest, legs, and arms. Then I move into a plank, holding still for a while. I start dipping my hips on one side, then the other—the shirt is sliding up little by little, displaying more thigh. After a minute, I fluidly change to a downward-facing dog. My ass is up in the air, hands on the mat, arms stretched forward. I push my head between my biceps and resist the urge to glance at Rague.

I'm trying to force my mind to behave, but I know he's behind me and is getting an eyeful of my briefs-clad butt. A few seconds later, I shift into a low lunge, followed by a big lunge. Then down into the downward dog again, just to fuck with him. But it backfires. My hard dick throbs, the thought that Rague is looking at me arouses me to no end. Lori never told me how difficult it is to practice yoga with a hard-on.

I go down in the baby cobra pose, lying on my belly, my dick pressing insistently against the soft mat beneath me, the friction is killing me. The air in the room's turned heavy and charged with sexual tension. The skin on my neck prickles, and without even looking at him, I'm very aware of the way Rague is staring at me.

I feel like a small rabbit who's waiting to be eaten, and hell, I want him to do it so badly. I'll even provide the seasoning. But he remains painfully quiet—except for his loud breathing—and aching distant. I can hear my heart punching against my ribs, knowing every move I make has him lusting after me—or so I hope. I try to keep my focus on what I'm doing, but I'm a mess of *need*, for his cock, his bruising hands, and aggressive lips. I don't need kisses when I fuck. Lately, I've avoided them during hookups. But the way he kisses, so eager and untamed is addictive. I fucking crave it. The sudden feather touch on the bare flesh on my upper thigh makes me suck in a deep breath. His fingers are lightly brushing, slowly moving up toward my briefs, taking the fabric of the shirt with them. Then they close around one butt cheek and squeeze hard. Rague's deep rumble makes me moan in response.

"Shirt off. On the bench press," he growls, and then I feel him shifting behind me.

I yank the shirt over my head and stumble my way to the bench, swallowing the lump of excitement in my throat. I lay down on the leather bench—which is higher than usual—not sparing a look at the bar holding the weights. My dick is tenting my briefs, I want to tug them down and stroke myself so badly. I hear him approaching and close my eyes briefly before opening them again.

He moves until he's above my head, legs spread on either side of the bench, hard cock looming close just like the other day at the gym. This time, though, he's fucking naked. From my low position he looks like a damn warrior ready to plunder and ravage...me. His giant, thick dick curls up toward his belly with the heavy balls hanging loose and less than an inch from my face. I tilt my head back and give one a long lick before taking it

inside my mouth to suck it with gusto. He tastes so damn good, soapy and salty. The musky smell of his cock turns stronger the more Rague stares at my body; precum beads at the slit.

“Lick my cock,” he orders me, his voice doesn’t allow a refusal. I pass my tongue over his length, up and down, while he holds his erection near my face.

“Close your mouth,” he commands and slaps his dick on my lips a couple of times, then spreads precum on them.

“Suck on my balls.” He fists his length and slowly starts jerking off.

It appears Rague is used to giving orders when he fucks. I’m glad to oblige, but I’m not going to remain silent.

“The left one? The right one? Both of them? When you order me around you need to be more specific or...”

His hand abruptly grabs my chin and pushes it further back, forcing me to open my mouth just before he feeds me his dick. He goes straight for my throat, making me gag without stopping, pumping and grunting. He chokes me on it, pushing all the way down, his hand holding me still. He growls and then pulls out, letting me get only a couple of breaths in before stuffing my mouth again.

“Stretch those lips around me. Good boy.”

The praise makes my skin tingle all over. My dick aches like a motherfucker. I inhale deeply through my nose and relax my throat further when he starts ramming his beauty in and out ruthlessly. His thumb brushes over my neck. “My fuck toy.”

I moan, and an impressive amount of precum leaks from his cock on my tongue. I’m so hungry for more.

He suddenly pulls out, and I whine when he takes a step back and walks around the bench.

“I filled your belly already today. Need to mark your hole now,” he sexily explains, stopping at my feet. He tears my briefs off snarling at them—and okay I get it, no more underwear when I’m around him.

Grabbing under my knees he pulls me to the end of the bench and keeps my thighs spread wide. The bench is the perfect height for him to fuck me. He pushes my knees close to my chest to look at my asshole.

“All angry, red, and swollen.” He sounds pleased with his work. “You sore?”

“No,” I reply, but I hiss when his big, spit-slick, callous finger spears mercilessly inside me.

“What did I say about lying?” He spanks me while keeping his finger in, and my body jolts in surprise, toe-curling pleasure pushing it even deeper. The sting makes my dick jerk, and Rague’s smirk tells me he noticed it. I grab it and start stroking.

“No. I’m not sore,” I lie again, because I want more pain. He snarls and gives me four spanks before pushing another finger inside. I cry out with every slap, writhing and showing more of my butt cheeks in invitation.

“Tell me you want me to turn your ass red, but don’t fucking lie to me,” he grunts and spits, inserting a third finger. It burns. His hand keeps coming down, and the sting feels fucking amazing. So incredibly so that with the next slap, I spurt jizz all over my chest.

“Yes. Rague. Fuck!” I can’t stop bucking my hips. Ripples of ecstasy continue running through my body. It’s so good it, hurts and the pain makes it good again. It’s the most delicious vicious circle.

When I finally come down from it, Rague is staring at my messy chest. He lifts a hand and rubs his fingers in my cum before slowly taking them to his lips. He hesitates a second but then pushes them in his mouth, letting out one of his sexy growls. Seeing him taste me for the first time almost steals all the air from my lungs.

He licks his fingers clean and then focuses those dark eyes on me again.

“Let’s try again.” He twists the fingers that are still in my ass, making my hole clench. “Are you sore, Ollie?”

The burning stretch is very real. “I’m sore, but I love it. Want to feel your cum in me.” Cannot be more honest than this.

“Fuck,” he mutters. He pulls his digits slowly out of me and then turns to grab a packet of lube from his discarded sweats. Does he carry one in every pair of pants he owns? The thought doesn’t sit well with me. Where is this jealousy coming from? And the neediness? The whorish desperation every time he shows me his cock—his bare cock that he’s slicking with lube, and that will soon fuck me raw.

He suddenly grabs my legs and throws them on his shoulders as his big head breaches my ring. Two more thrusts, and he fills me with a potent punch of his hips. I let go of the air kept in my lungs when he bottoms out. Without a condom, the difference is subtle but real. The sting quickly ebbs away, replaced by the urge to impale myself on him.

“Fuuuuck! Never felt such a hot and tight piece of ass around my dick.” He grinds and rolls his hips slowly, stretching me further, and seemingly relishing every single movement—if his long, gruntled groans are enough proof.

His feet are firmly planted on the floor, his thick hairy thighs slightly bent while he pistons his hips, his half-lidded eyes focus on where our bodies are

connected. This is exactly what I dreamed of doing with him while we worked out at Lenny's gym.

The mirrors behind him give me a perfect view of his firm, high ass flexing every time he slams inside me, and the sight is too much. Under this light, I can clearly see every single scar marring his back. And there are too many. What happened to him?

My dick is half-hard, bouncing on my belly. His chest is right in front of me, wide, brawny, and yummy, and my fingers are dying to touch him. But instead, I raise them until they wrap around the weight bar, moaning as he pushes into me over and over. He leans forward, nearly folding me in two and places his hands on top of mine on the bar, tightening his grip, his cavernous eyes laser-focused on my face.

“When I come inside you and fill you full of my seed, I’ll own this hole.”

What? This is the sex talking, right? Intense things you say in the heat and passion of the moment, and then as soon as it’s done, you forget it all.

He buries himself up to the hilt and grips my jaw in a firm hold. “I will own it as soon as I breed it.”

With a smooth movement, he straightens and drops my legs around his waist, hooking my feet behind his back. I feel him bend his knees as his strong fingers palm my ass—the same fingers that crushed a man’s fist—so hot.

I’m suddenly being lifted into the air. My whimper of surprise turns into a gasp followed by a slutty moan when he starts bouncing me on his cock. In this position, it’s like he’s tearing me in two, and I feel so fucking high, I lose track of everything but the pleasure he’s giving me with each drive of his hips. My nails sink into his biceps, and I drop my head back, crying out



all my bliss. His herculean strength and the way he manhandles me is such a turn-on, all I want to do is shoot cum everywhere.

“Yeah,” he breathes, his large, scarred hands moving my ass up and down his cock. “Open that tight little hole for me. Make it nice and loose for my cock.”

God, that mouth.

Next, he slams me against the wall, and like a damn machine, he continues to power inside me. His hair is a mess of sweaty curls, and he makes a soft sound as his mouth takes mine. I open my lips and our tongues meet. He’s much taller than me, and my head has to tilt back to take his assaulting kiss. I moan as Rague’s tongue slides against mine, his hand fists the back of my hair, yanking my head further back to command the kiss. He breaks us apart but leaves his open mouth over mine, panting his pleasure between my lips. It makes me shudder, my cock stiffening impossibly more between us.

The look of ecstasy on his face makes him even more handsome, and I can’t resist anymore. I need to touch him. My hands are still on his biceps, but I lift one and hazard a flick to his nipple. His jackhammering falters for a moment, but in the next, the rhythm turns to a frantic one.

“More!” he chokes out, sinking his teeth into my lower lip.

Fuck. I pinch and pull the nipple, and he growls like a damn beast in heat. He swears loudly, and I take that as encouragement to add my nails to the mix, scratching and digging them into his pecs. It drives him even wilder. He’s battering my hole now, hitting my prostate with every thrust, mouth open in ecstasy, eyes on my face unseeingly. I’m addicted to the pleasure-dazed look I can put on his face—and to his cock. His thick, long, ruthless, ten-inch cock.

I turn my face to his bicep and bite hard before sucking, leaving a bruise on the hard muscle.

“You want to fucking mark me?” He sounds mad. “Then I’ll claim you right back.”

He grabs my hair and pulls hard, exposing my neck to his mouth. He sucks so hard, I feel the sensation right around my dick and I come. Fireworks explode in front of my eyes, and my cum shoots between us, hitting my chest and my neck. My balls hurt after releasing a second time. My head has dropped onto his bicep while his thrusts have grown more frantic. He’s close. I can see it in his gritted teeth and the tension in his shoulders

“I’ll come so deep up your fucking ass that my jizz is going to become part of you.”

I just realized that this obsessed compulsion, this impulsive pull I feel toward him is a fucking two-way street.

“Do it,” I pant, clamping my muscles around his dick each time he pulls back. I graze my teeth over his lower lip and then whisper, “Own it.”

Rague digs his fingers roughly into my ass cheeks and then unloads inside me with a roar. His body stiffens, and he rams his cock three more times, pausing between pumps to let his cum reach the deepest part of me. I tighten around his dick, milking him dry, wanting to get every last drop.

“I’m going to fill this perfect hole every day,” he grunts while still shooting inside me.

I’m incapable of answering, only making weird, low, blissful noises. I feel like I’m floating, enjoying the echoes of pleasure. Rague is still leisurely sliding in and out of me. His hand is massaging my scalp, brushing my hair, and I’m still all wrapped up in his arms. I think I might be a little touch-starved since I don’t want him to let me go.

But then, I slowly become aware of a crushing pressure. Rague's mighty chest is pushing against mine. I try to shift, to ease the burden currently preventing me from breathing, but he is heavily caging me in, and I can't move him. Damn, the man is made of big, thick bones and solid muscle.

"Beastie, I need air to survive," I almost wheeze out. He pulls away from the wall, taking me with him. I'm still pressed against his chest, one strong arm under my butt as he walks us out of the gym. His softening cock is still in me, and it lightly thrusts inside me with every step he takes.

"You can put me down," I tell him.

"No."

I huff irritably at his tone, but don't say anything else.

He stops in the kitchen and sits me on the island before wrapping his hand around my throat and giving me a slow, dirty kiss.

I abruptly pull back, screaming, "Enchiladas!" Did the timer ring? I didn't fucking hear it, too lost in Rague.

He frowns but lets me scramble back and off the island. I wince when his dick pops out of my very sore ass, but saving our dinner is my priority. Thankfully, they only got slightly brown on top. So, I pepper them with cheese—Rague doesn't have fresh cilantro—and let them cool off. When I turn, he is staring heatedly at my thighs. Specifically at the slick path of cum currently running down my legs.

He spins me around, his chest against my back. He presses against me till he has me caged against the counter and uses his half-chub to gather some of the cum on my inner thighs with the tip. Then he pushes the cum-covered head of his dick inside my loose hole once again.

"Mine," he growls, and I almost have a mini orgasm. Is he still floating on the post-sex cloud? What does he mean by that? That I'm his bitch?

Because I surely am, for as long as he wants. I'll serve his big gorgeous cock as often as he needs.

"Can't waste premium juice, can we?" I tease him, trying to enjoy my buzz instead of having those confusing thoughts. He sniffs at my words.

We eat the enchiladas at the kitchen table, Rague sitting on a chair with me on his lap since the stubborn beastie refuses to take his hard dick out of me. I kind of like it, the physical closeness. I never had it before with my hookups. And the only person I let close is Sully. I must really be touch-starved.

We talk more about the warehouse project while he enjoys the enchiladas. My smile gets bigger with every bite and consequent satisfied grunt he lets escape. And when he moves to the cheesecake? The growls coming out of his mouth should be illegal for how hot they sound. He tells me about how his family has a thing for desserts, and I try hard to remember the recipe for Lori's grandma's butter cookies. Why? Because I want to hear Rague's sexy, blissed noises and know I caused them once again.

I suddenly realize that I feel...happy. It's usually a very fleeting emotion for me. I'm more worried, angry, upset, anxious about the future. This is nice.

Guilt slowly crawls up my gut. I've only thought about Sully a couple of times today. I know he's fine on his trip, but soon he'll be back, and...

Rague's phone starts ringing, and he begrudgingly lets me go. I follow his bitable meaty ass until it disappears down the hallway. I wash the dishes and take a fast shower. I feel tired while I pull on one of Rague's shirts. The work I did today and the delicious railing my ass has endured are starting to weigh on me.

I go looking for him to ask what time I need to set the alarm for tomorrow. I pass near the open door to the attached garage and frown at the two barrels

of acid sitting in the corner. Are they for work?

Rague really likes his job. I wonder what it would feel like to wake up every morning content at the thought of starting a new day. Can't do it. It's too alien of a concept for me.

The demolition part is fucking dope, though. The construction as well, it has an exciting feel to it. It must be so rewarding to see something you built when you walk down the street.

My phone vibrates in my hand, and I realize I'm still standing in front of the garage door. I look down at the screen and smile at my brother's text.

Sully-doo- *Greetings from the capital*

Me- *U sound like one of those tourist postcards*

Sully-doo- *I'm a tourist here. Brad says hi*

Me- *Thank ur bestie for me*

Sully-doo- *What for?*

Me- *Pretty sure he saved u a hundred times already since u started ur trip*

Sully-doo- *Fuck you, and yes he did*

I smile at his text, he's such a klutz. But I know Brad's got him.

Sully-doo- *How're things at Chez Dick? Are you okay?*

Me- *Don't worry about me*

Sully-doo- *Can't help it*

Me- *I'm staying at a friend's house*

Sully-doo- *Is friend code for Fleeting Random I Enjoy 'N Dick?*

Me- *WTF*

Since when does my little brother talk about sex related stuff?

Sully-doo- *I wish I could see your face. I gotta go. Later, bro*

Me- *That's the lamest goodbye*

Sully-doo- *Brad disagrees*

I snort and close the chat, turning to Rague's office. The door is closed, but I can hear his low rumbling voice on the other side. A shiver rushes down my back at the sound. I inch closer to the door, ear pressed on the cold wooden surface just to get more of that hot, deep, cavernous tone of his. The words I hear stop me from breathing, though, as I catch the tail end of a conversation.

"...we have to find some proof. Lenny has to keep those files in that office. What? Fucking finally! When is Clover going in?"

My mind is filled with a thousand different thoughts scattering around. What does that mean? Who the hell is Rague? Is he an undercover cop? He doesn't look like one. Not that I know what one looks like, apart from the actors on TV shows. Is he a competitor looking for dirt on Lenny? Does he want Lenny's very lucrative fighting business? That doesn't make sense. He's the owner of a legit company. What's the connection with Lenny?

Then another thought sneaks up on me. Does he know about Dick and Lenny? Did he get close to me to get information? He didn't ask me anything...yet. Will he when I'm utterly enraptured with him? Because I already am. When he said he wanted to use me, did he mean for information too? If that's the case, I'm a damn fool.

Fuck, my head is exploding with questions I'm afraid to find out the answers to.

I move to the guest room, and before shutting the door, I glance at his bedroom on the other side of the hall. His plush bed is massive, but the insane urge I always have to dive face-first into it and smell his musky scent on his sheets isn't there tonight.

Dick's daily text arrives and my mood plummets even harder into the floor. It's like he always knows when I'm down, ready to give me one of his kicks.

I lie down on my bed. It's Rague I'm thinking about, though. Round and round my brain whirs with speculations and assumptions. But one thought keeps coming back to me: is this all a lie?



The next morning, we are finishing breakfast—toast and eggs—when he tells me he needs to deal with boring office stuff, and that I'll go with one of his workers to build a den.

“Oh.” I try to cover the disappointment but fail miserably. I'm excited at the prospect of seeing the other side of the business, but also still confused about what I overheard. If he is trying to get information he'd have to spend his time with me. Which is exactly what I want and why I feel disappointed. I'm crazy. Needy and clingy. Wow, I'm such a catch. No wonder Rague wants to put some space between us.

He mistakes my discontent for worry. “Martin has a lot of experience and is a fair boss. We'll go to the office together, and I'll introduce you.”

I nod and take my empty plate to the sink. Picking at the cuff of his flannel shirt I'm wearing, I ask, "Will I see you for lunch?"

He prowls toward me and stops, leaving an inch of breath between us. He stares intensely at me before answering, "No. Have a meeting with a potential client." He grabs my jaw in that possessive way he does. But I must confuse it with his bossy nature.

"I'll come back home in the afternoon, kitty."

Home he says. His home, I remind myself. My sleep-starved brain is not working properly this morning. I feel sulky and petty. But yesterday's eavesdropping kept me up almost all night.

I huff. "Can't be a kitty with this hot ass." I find some sassiness amid the bad mood.

He stares at it and slaps it hard. "Fuck yes you can." He swallows my gasp when he lowers his head for a wet kiss. "Like seeing you in my clothes," he whispers in my ear before moving to the mail on the table.

I blush like a shy schoolgirl and turn toward the counter, utterly shocked by this new development. Rague seems more relaxed today. Is that a post-sex perk? He drops some of his tough exterior at times with me. But this is different.

I sigh and busy myself making sandwiches. "Do you want a sandwich for lunch, or should I share them with this Martin guy?"

I'm pushed against the counter a second later by his big, imposing body. Slowly, he picks up the kitchen knife and continues making the sandwich while I stand in the circle of his arms.

"Let's make something clear here." He presses his hardening cock between my ass cheeks. "You don't share anything with anyone but me."



“How about a few words?” I quip, annoyed by his bossy tone—a part of me is turned on as well, a smaller part. “Can I have *permission* to talk? Or should I mime my thoughts?”

He tightens his grip on the knife handle before stabbing it into the wooden board. My cock leaks. Apparently, broody and dangerous does it for me big time. “That snarky mouth of yours will force me to fuck your too-sore ass against this counter.”

I grab a Ziplock bag and slide a couple sandwiches inside. “Didn’t you get enough of it?” There’s a hint of vulnerability in my voice, but I pretend not to hear it.

“Fucking never, Ollie. I told you I own this hole.”

There’s a terribly wonderful churn in my belly; it must be caused by his enormous dick stroking between my cheeks. Not because he sounds fucking sure and possessive. But instead of terrifying me, I feel high. I got it bad.

Without thinking, I take a bite of one of his four sandwiches before sliding it into the bag.

“What was that? Still hungry?” he whispers with a hint of amusement in his voice.

I freeze, feeling my cheeks turn crimson. “Lunch food is better when shared,” I simply say, remembering one of Lori’s grandma’s life mottos. “Since I can’t share it with anybody else, I’m doing it with you.” I turn my head toward him to gauge his expression, and I’m breathless. He’s trying to stifle a smile, and the teasing way he’s looking at me sparks a warm glow in my chest.

Relaxed Rague, and now teasing Rague. Another post-sex perk?

“There is a faint dimple in your left cheek when your smile deepens.” My fingers lightly brush his jaw when he suddenly flinches away, an angry look

filling his eyes. My hand is frozen midair, and although I know I shouldn't take it personally, the rejection hurts. Something terrible must have happened to him to make him deny himself such a common way of contact. I thought it was getting slightly better because of the way he let me touch him yesterday. I was wrong.

Forty minutes later, we're entering Carver Construction and Demolition's office.

There's a woman reading a thick book, looking like a platinum blonde queen, behind a horseshoe desk.

When her eyes lift to us her lilac lips stretch into a big smile. "Morning boss, and who do we have here?" She's sliding her hungry eyes up and down my body, leaning her ample bosom on the shiny desk surface. I feel a bit violated—and strangely flattered. "Hello, cupcake. So very, very nice to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine. Margery, right? I'm Ollie. Rague talks highly of you, now I know why," I flirt right back.

She lets out a giggle. I can't detect her age. In her forties, presumably, but her skin looks flawless. I hope I'll get to her age without a wrinkle.

"Oh, thank you. He'd be lost without me." She puckers her lips and looks at Rague. "But he doesn't appreciate my ass enough. How about you? What do you think?"

"I can't see it from here. Would you do a catwalk for me?"

"Meoowww," she swipes her long nails at me.

"Love the glittery violet nail polish. OPI?" I ask her, remembering Lori's favorite brand.

"Yes!" Her eyes sparkle. "It's called Feelin' Libra-ted. I'm a Libra."

"It all makes sense now. I have a friend who'd love to meet you."

“Awww, you’re such a cupcake.”

I’m about to reply when Rague closes his hand around my nape, and I’m yanked to his side. An *oomph* escapes my mouth when my chest hits his hard body. One of my hands falls to the waist of his jeans for balance, while I force the other by my side. I try to touch him as little as possible, even more so since the kitchen incident.

“Hey!” I glare at him, having to tilt my head way back. Damn it, he’s tall. He ignores me and tells Margery, “Back off.”

The secretary’s behavior changes drastically. She parks her butt back on her chair and smugly says, “I called it! If my brain could still send signals to my face, you’d see the smug smile on my lips.”

I chuckle and she winks, or I think she does. Her face really is a mask of Botox.

“Nice hickey, by the way.” I think about the one I left on Rague’s thick bicep, but she must be talking about the big, purple mark on my neck.

“Everybody else said it was impossible, but I didn’t. Tell me, cupcake, how did you do it?” she asks eagerly.

“Do what?” I’m confused.

“Tame Ethan Hunt. Catch Lupin the third.” She flicks her eyes to Rague and then back to me

I frown.

“Find the Genie in the bottle. Beat Donkey Kong.” Is she talking about Rague? Does she think we are together-together?

“Get Mario’s Super Star. Climb the magic beanstalk...and how long and big are we talking about?”

“Enough. Work.” Rague’s booming voice cuts her off.

“Yes, boss,” she replies in a mocking way. She isn’t afraid of him in the least. “Your desk is filled with papers to sign. Martin is waiting in your office. Jeff is working on the Appletons’ house because Landon is sick. Mitch is running a bit late, car problems.”

“Give him the name of my mechanic, he’ll give him a good price if Mitch tells him I sent him. Does he need a ride today?” Wow, Rague seems to care about the people that work for him.

“No, Jose is picking him up. Oh, and someone’s gotta do the elementary school thing again.”

Rague just looks at her.

“You know the place where all the screaming, disease-carrying little demons like to go?” Margery adds with a look I imagine she’d make when coming across something dead on her doorstep.

I snort. I guess she doesn’t like children. Does Rague like them? Despite his blank expression, I can easily imagine him with a couple of brats. He’d be a very protective and attentive father.

“Send Jose,” he says, guiding me toward the first door on the left. The place is a normal-looking office with a touch of green and yellow on the furniture and walls. Everything looks new and shiny.

“No can do. He did it three times in a row, the poor soul. Everybody else is too busy. Tag, you’re it.”

Rague grumbles. “Text me the date and time.” I try to smother my smile but can’t hold it in when I see Margery doing the same. Gigantic, broody Rague towering over a class full of tiny kids? I wish I was a fly.

“I like you, cupcake!” Margery yells from behind me. Rague keeps walking, dragging me with him.

“It’s mutual,” I answer back before the door to his office closes behind me, and Rague introduces me to Martin.

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## Chapter 9

*RAGUEL*

At noon, I'm driving toward my mothers' house once again, but this time, I'm heading for the base, where my brothers are.

What happened in the kitchen earlier, Ollie's sweet words, his affectionate eyes, and soft touch on my cheek—and the way I fucking jerked back—is still playing in my head. The moment was ruined. All the lightness was gone. I saw the hurt on his face. I hated it. Ollie tried to hide it with a joke, but his laugh sounded empty. Then he ran away from me with the excuse to brush his teeth. I broke the back of one of the kitchen chairs when I grabbed it to stop myself from following him and reminding him who he belongs to. He didn't ask me why I flinched. Because he knows about past traumas. The burns on his pecs are just like the long scars on my back, they molded us into who we are. They made us stronger, warier, angrier, but they are also part of the agonizing memories that will never go away.

All the way to work, he was his usual cocky self, smirking and joking around, listening to the podcast while I grunted unhappily. He kept his hands firmly and respectfully on his lap, and instead of making me feel better, it did the opposite. It's like I'm pushing him away without wanting to.

Yesterday, when I finished talking to Rami in my office, I didn't like seeing the guest bedroom door closed. We never sleep together. Never fuck in a bed. And I want to. I so badly crave to see him squirming on my king-sized mattress, under my two-hundred-and-fifty pounds while I force him to take my cock—force is the wrong term, since he's always drooling for it.

Anyone else would be wary around me because of my size and attitude, but with Ollie, things seem natural and right. He fits perfectly in my life. It's the early days, but I know he's mine. And if he doesn't know it yet, he will. I'll show him. God fucking help me, I'll tie him to my bed and fuck him till he gets it.

This bondage fantasy keeps coming back. I should really explore it with him.

I rub my fingers down my stubble, remembering the redness it left on his cheeks. Fucking love that, just like the imprint of my palm on his butt cheeks. But bruises? Those I don't like, not even mine. However, I can't stop myself from being too rough.

Serena welcomes me at the gates, and soon, I'm in the garage as Uri is getting out of his Hummer. He's holding four bags with the name of his fast-food chain on the sides. The smell of fried food spreads quickly around the garage.

"I brought extra for you, growing boy," he jokes. I give him a grunt, he can interpret it as he wants. But I can eat. Ollie's sandwiches barely made a dent



in my stomach, but I smile at the memory of his bite on one of them.

Uri has stopped in front of the brown wall of tools. Following Serena's instruction, he places his hand on the black screen, concealed among the pieces of hardware. A green laser light moves over his palm just before the brown panel eases backward and slides along the rest of the wall. Uri goes down the metallic stairs, and I follow, hearing the whooshing sound of the panel closing behind me.

Linda greets us at the bottom. "Thank God. I'm starving," she says, grabbing a couple of bags from Uri to see what's inside.

She's in her sixties, like Meg, but there're no grey strands in her hair. Her delicate features and small lean body give her an ageless look.

Gabe is in the FUNS room, which stands for Fucked Up Nasty Shitheads—Rami came up with the acronym of course. I never remember what Serena stands for. The FUNS room is a large space with no windows and a big sink in the back. One wall is made of glass to let the rest of us watch, and there's a door on the left that leads to a bathroom we use to remove...incriminating body fluids.

A metal chair is nailed to the floor in the center of the room that the donors are usually tied to, naked. Not today though, since Gabe has his own... methods. The donor is anchored against a wooden board. Arms and hands spread like starfish, wearing only briefs. Didn't know people still wear tighty whities.

The plastic covering the entire length of the walls and floor is light blue with fucking clouds—Rami really did it this time.

"What the actual fuck?" Uri swears. "It looks like a nursery in there."

"Dexter's son's nursery." Linda chuckles at her joke and passes me a carton of French fries.

“Who’s the donor?” Raph’s appears behind us. He steals a handful of fries from me and offers one to Michael.

“One? Such a gentleman,” his fiancé replies, tossing the salty potato into his mouth.

“I’ll let you sink those sharp, ruthless teeth into me later, how about that?” Raph replies matter-of-factly. I can see the hungry gaze they exchange. They’re kinky as shit.

Sari walks out of his lab, thankfully ending the current conversation. He waves at Uri and me, while I extend the carton of fries toward Michael, earning a beaming smile from him and a glare from Raph. He proceeds to yank the whole container from my hand. The fucker. So, I flip him off.

“The donor?” Uri passes burgers and drinks around.

“The donor is Ralph Pullman, a paramedic who kills patients, and then with the help of his cousin, a funeral director they harvest the organs and sell them on the black market,” Sari replies.

“How did they get away with it?” Michael asks. “There are papers that need to be filled out before a body is released.”

“Bribes,” Uri guesses.

“And the family has to be informed.”

“The paramedic is quite thorough and chooses people with no family. He also goes for the ones with a long history of disease—but with viable organs—with the result that their deaths never raise suspicion.” Linda says with a shrug. Michael is the only one looking affronted, but in our defense, we’ve seen much worse.

“Where’s the cousin?” Raph asks.

“Already dealt with him,” Linda replies.

“So, why is Gabe in there with the paramedic?” Uri asks, taking a bite of his burger. Gabe only kills people who abuse, hurt, or murder women and children. Occasionally, he will make an exception, though.

“The last ten people were women,” Sari explains, handing me the burger Uri just gave him. The smell is divine, and I quickly attack the greasy bun, turning my head again toward the FUNS room.

Gabe is near the long tool table, intent on choosing from the throwing weapons. The donor is still out of it.

“Linda, turn on the intercom, please,” Sari tells her. She pushes the button on the little panel on the glass door.

“Gabe, the donor is a match for two leukemia patients in Chicago and one in New York. I need more bone marrow,” Sari says.

“Okay,” Gabe replies, walking away from the table. He takes off his black suit jacket and places it around the back of the chair in the corner before sitting.

“Sweet! A live episode of *House* without the misanthropic, grumpy doctor.”

“Are you fucking with us?” Rami shows up next to Linda. He’s holding a tumbler that says, “No hablo fucktardo.”

“Wha?” Uri mumbles with his mouth full of fries.

“Exhibit A, the misanthropic psycho.” He points at Raph. “And B, the grumpiest of them all.” He glowers at me. Fuck, he’s still angry. Yesterday night at the factory he played the part in front of Lenny, but as soon as we were alone he flipped me off and walked away. The fact that Lenny seems close to include us in the *extra fights*—as he called them—is the only reason that keeps my hands away from his neck. Still I need to fix this thing with Rami.

I grab the bag of onion rings Uri is holding and offer them to Rami. He sniffs and turns his head before quickly spinning back just enough to yank the bag out of my hand and flip me off. I can't hold anything in my hands tonight.

If Ollie were here, he'd have a witty retort for Rami. I wonder how the work on the den is going. I sent him a text, and he just replied with *fine*.

Sari comes back with a big syringe and a small container on a metal tray.

"Do you want me to do it?" Michael asks him. Sari doesn't like to get too close to the donors. But he does like to watch.

Sari nods at Michael and passes him the tray.

"We're coming in," Raph warns Gabe before tapping the code into the panel. It opens and Raph and Michael enter the room.

"Try the front of the hip for bone marrow and take more tissue samples as well; you can place them in the cassette on the tray."

"Got it." Michael walks to the donor with Raph next to him.

"I'll take care of shipping the samples to the different hospitals," Rami tells Sari. "It will all look perfectly legit."

"Sari, there's not much in the front hip." Michael's voice says through the intercom. How can the donor sleep through a thin, but very long needle aspirating his marrow fluid?

"Try the sternum," Sari suggests.

Michael has his back to me, but I see him swinging his hand back, gathering momentum, and then stabbing the syringe into the guy's chest.

"Hardcore," I hear Rami muttering. The donor finally jerks, arching his back, and lets out a loud grunt, reminding me of Frankenstein's monster coming to life.

“Stay still, shithead,” Raph snarls, pushing his forearm on the donor’s neck, cutting off his air supply. His face turns from red to blue very quickly, but Raph doesn’t let go until Michael is done.

The donor is still coughing when they exit the room with the tray full of gifts.

“Yo, Gabe! The shithead is ready for your circus act,” Rami jokes.

“Good one!” Linda gives him a high-five.

“Is Meg up in her office?” I ask. She’s rarely part of our bloody side business. If we ask her, she helps us by creating a mental and behavioral profile on the donors, since she’s been a forensic psychiatrist for almost forty years. I asked her to make one on Richard Truman.

“No. She’s out,” Linda replies. Meg is probably at one of her consultations.

“But she told me to give you this.” The behavioral profile on Truman.

I skim through it not surprised by the words: violent, egotistical, arrogant, immoral, money obsessed and ruthless. The fuck I’ll let him near Ollie again.

Gabe leaves his chair, gathers some tossing knives in one hand and stops around fifteen feet away from the donor. His black shirt sleeves are impeccably rolled up on his forearms, his blond hair neatly styled back. His posture exudes covert danger and intense focus, like a feline predator ready to strike. The knives are held by his side in a loose, casual grip. He stretches his neck left and right slowly, like he has all the time in the world. This is Gabe’s terrifying tactic. And it works like a charm every single time.

“Wha-what...w-where am I? Who a-are you-u?” the donor stutters, looking at Gabe with bug eyes. He can’t see us, since the wall is made of one-way glass. There’s a button on the intercom that turns it into see-through glass, but Gabe doesn’t like the distraction.

He starts tossing the knives.

Whoosh, thump, scream. The knife sunk into the donor's left thigh.

Whoosh, thump, scream. Right arm.

Whoosh, whoosh, thump, thump, longer scream. Shoulder and ear.

Here comes the begging. Gabe remains mute. Cool as a cucumber. He rarely talks to the donors. They usually die not even knowing the reason why.

"Damn, that's cool." Michael sounds in awe.

"My Gabe is a perfectly oiled machine. Composed and deadly." Linda is very proud of all of our...skills.

"Robotic fucker," I hear Rami mutter.

The donor has snot and tears running down his face. The pain has turned his face red, and sweat and blood from the wounds cover his body. He hasn't pissed himself, though.

"P-please. I have money. T-take it," he pleads, his voice breaks a couple of times with pants of pained breaths. He's looking frantically at the glass wall. He can't see us, but he can hear us, and I bet he hopes we will accept his monetary offer.

A moment of silence. Then the sudden sound of Raph slurping his Coke from a straw breaks it. Michael looks at him with an exasperated frown.

"Do you want some, babe?" Raph asks him, unperturbed.

"He's going for another weapon," Uri says with excitement.

Gabe grabs four axes. Raph whistles. He cut a head right off a donor's neck with one a few months back. And I fucking missed it.

Michael is now smiling at my brother, love filling his light blue eyes. He got used to all this fairly quick. Ollie will do the same. It's not like he had a

sheltered, privileged life. He grew up in the slums without a mother and with a piece-of-shit father. He'll understand our ways. I'm sure.

Linda hands me the last burger. It's cold, but I'm still hungry and nobody wants it.

The tossing resumes, but there's a hypnotic beauty in watching an axe flying in the air. The rotating movement is elegant and fast, and when the wide blade hits the target, the bumping sound sends a shiver down my spine. I love this shit.

The last axe pierces the donor's forehead, and his eyes fly open. He makes a gurgling sound, his mouth contorted as blood starts spilling between his lips. Gabe is still in front of him, looking at his work. His expression doesn't show any kind of emotion, except for the icy coldness in his grey eyes.

The donor has knives and axes sticking out all over his body—his briefs have turned Scorsese-red. His head suddenly drops forward, his whole body would have slumped down if it wasn't for the chains keeping him to the board. Blood and saliva continue running out of his mouth, but I'm pretty sure he's dead.

"That was fucking quick," Uri whines, like he doesn't know Gabe is the embodiment of fast efficiency. "Whose turn is it to help him clean up?"

Everybody grunts. I'm about to do it when Linda beats me to it. "Me. I need to talk to Gabe, might as well catch the proverbial two birds." Nobody questions her, happy to have avoided the cleaning this time.

"We should switch to Oxy cleaners. Bleach is tricky," Sari suddenly states.

"I was thinking about that yesterday. Those Oxy cleaners make even the invisible traces of blood unrecognizable to the most common blood-detecting tests," Michael agrees.

“Bleach also wipes away any trace of blood,” Rami offers. He puts the code in to the lab door and walks across it to sit behind his desk, where all his technology-related stuff is. One by one, we all follow him.

The lab is where Michael and Sari work on the donor’s samples. On the right, there are couches and a kitchen with a dining table for the rest of us. I take my usual place on the sofa—leaving the file on the coffee table—and Raph and Michael do the same.

“Let me try to explain this to you,” Michael says. “The three standard tests for picking up blood rely on a protein in the blood called hemoglobin. This protein loves oxygen. In the body, it’s hemoglobin’s job to grab onto oxygen and carry it from the lungs to the rest of the body. But the new Oxy cleaners flood a blood stain with a lot of oxygen. Once the protein gets its fill of oxygen, it won’t even bother to snatch oxygen from the investigators’ blood-detecting tests.”

“So, the tests will come up negative,” Raph finishes, earning a beaming smile from his fiancé.

“Precisely.”

“I still think fire is the best way to kill all evidence,” I interject.

“Flame bitch,” Rami coughs into his red gloved fist.

I’m just an eager fan.

“Fire can leave evidence.” Raph sounds bored

“Not the way I do it,” I mutter.

“The torch has spoken, ladies and gents.” Uri throws an arm around Sari’s narrow shoulders. His dreads are high in a ponytail.

“I thought he was the Hulk.” Sari frowns, leaning into Uri.

“How’s your twunk? Did you fuck that tight ass already?” Rami casually asks me. How the hell does he know about Ollie? Did Michael and Raph



tell him he's staying with me?

"Who?" Uri straightens to attention, the gossipy fucker.

I stand up and turn my whole body toward Rami, trying fucking hard to push down the boiling anger rising inside my guts. "Don't talk about Ollie that way!"

"Ollie who?" Uri insists.

"Stop Hulking out; twice in a week is too much even for you." Rami glares at me, slamming the box containing the sedative on his desk not too gently.

"I can still hurt you badly before it takes effect," I growl menacingly, glancing at the box while taking a step his way.

"All this macho bullshit talk is boring me to no end. Just jump at each other's throats already," Raph huffs.

"Raph!" Michael scolds him.

"Yeah, I haven't seen the green guy in years," Uri is talking about my red haze like some kind of entertainment. Yes, both my brothers are crazy pieces of shit.

"Stop it!" Sari comes between me and Rami and doesn't move, even when Uri tries to pull him with a snarl. "Rague, you're better than this. Rami is clearly poking you for some inexplicable reason." His blue eyes are on me, and it's damn hard not to do what they are pleading.

"I have a very good reason. This is payback." Rami crosses his arms with a grimace on his face.

"I said I was fucking sorry and I sent you a box filled with cheese puffs and animal kingdom DVDs."

Rami's arms drop to his sides, and his voice has some uncertainty in it.

"You did? I didn't get anything."

“Well, take it up with the post office!” I grunt. It was Ollie’s idea. Well, I told him I pissed one of my brothers off, and he suggested I give him stuff. Not like buying his forgiveness, but more along the lines of letting him know I cared and was sorry. By the relaxed posture Rami is sporting now, that was good advice.

Usually, our bros’ version of a heart-to-heart is telling each other to fuck off. Maybe there’s some physical altercations that end in a meal together, bruises and all. But that’s it.

Seeing as there’s no more need to stand between us, Sari finally lets Uri yank him against his chest. So damn protective. Just like I am toward Ollie. I look at Sari and Uri with a frown.

“How’s Ollie?” Michael asks, taking my attention away. I only let him know that Ollie was getting better once, by text.

“He’s good.” I nod.

“Is that a friend of yours?” Sari asks hesitantly.

At the word *friend* an annoyed growl escapes my lips, and now my brothers are staring at me with different levels of confusion on their faces. *Great*. Only Michael and Rami are smiling at me. One knowingly, the other smugly.

“He’s...my Ollie.” Yes, that sounds right. I hope it’s explanatory enough. Now everybody looks shocked.

“From the top, please. With details.” Rami sits on his chair once again and pops his chin onto his fists.

I groan. Don’t want to fucking talk about it. I drop myself on the sofa again.

“It’s not a secret, nor an interesting topic,” Raph quips, rubbing Michael’s thigh. For once, my unsympathetic brother is helping me out—without consciously doing it.

“Mipahel, let me be the judge of it,” Rami says.

“You need to send the bone marrow and tissue samples,” Sari reminds him.

He reluctantly starts his magic, and with a flick of his wrist, a screen appears on the wall, and he, Serena and Sari go to work.

I take it as the right moment to ask Michael for a favor.

“Sure,” he says, while Raph utters at the same time, “It depends.”

“I need help buying a few things.” I’m looking only at Michael.

I can read on his face the moment he gets it. “They’re not for you, I take it?”

I shake my head in reply.

“My afternoon is free; we can go soon?” Michael waves his hand in the air making the red stones from his engagement ring shine under the sunlight coming from the big windows behind him.

Raph groans, not happy about our planning.

“You can stay home,” I tell him.

He wraps an arm around Michael and tsks. *Fair enough.*

“What did I miss?” Linda asks, entering the lab with Gabe behind her.

“A lot,” Rami replies, a glint of mischief filling his eyes.



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## Chapter 10

*OLIVER*

I wave goodbye at Martin from the front porch of Rague's house. He's a good guy and a great boss. We've worked fine together while building a small den. We still have two more days before finishing it, and I'm excited and eager to see it completed.

My phone starts ringing, and I stop fumbling for the house key to grab my cell instead.

"Coppers never check house roofs." Lori's illogical words make their way to my ear.

"Come again? It's a bit too late for your nonsense."

"I only wish I was coming. I'm all work, work, work," he whines.

"That's what business trips are for," I remind him.

"I miss you too, unfeeling arse," he mutters. "As I was saying..."

"Yeah, what the hell were you saying?" I bend forward, placing my elbows on the wooden rail and looking at the beautiful nature surrounding me.

Rague's bomber jacket keeps me warm.

"House roofs. The police never search them. So, when you decide to off Micro Dick..."

And it's also too late in the day for his murder talk.

"When?"

"Fuck yes. We have the perfect place to stash the yucky body." He talks so easily about it, like reading a shopping list.

"A, how do we haul him all the way onto the roof? B, the already leaking roof will cave with all that weight. C, the rotting body will attract birds and other animals for a free buffet. D, Google satellite. And those are just off the top of my head."

"I hate when you shoot down my evil plans." Lori huffs. "Did you stalk your Bull-Wolf-Bear again?"

"My what?"

"The gay community hasn't created a word for King Kong Jr. He's a combination of the super muscular Bull, the beardy and large-physiqued Bear, and the toned and strong Wolf. After my quick revisitation of queer terminology, answer my question." His mouth is an unstoppable machine.

"Yes, I told you he's one of the fighters."

"Is your father still forcing you to fight illegally? I will kill him using only my stiletto pumps and a potato peeler, as soon as I'm back tomorrow." Lori is tiny, but he has the skills to do it—not sure about the weapons he chose though.

"I'm fine. I'm staying at Rague's."

"Rague?"

"King Kong Jr." I roll my eyes at the nickname.

“OMG. You shagged him, didn’t you?” When I only sigh, he lets out a loud high-pitched scream that forces me to pull the phone away from my ear. “You slut! I bet he knows how to use that huge meat puppet. Please tell me he does. I live vicariously through you at the moment. Pleeeeease.”

Exasperated and knowing he won’t let it go, I reluctantly reply, “Yes, he’s... fuck. He’s amazing.”

Lori sighs contently. “Give me a minute of silence to imagine it.”

“Fuck off, I don’t want you drooling over my...” I freeze, stopping the word that’s coming from my mouth.

“Your what?” Lori’s voice has turned soft.

“Goddam, Lori, I don’t know.” I push away from the railing.

“Codswallop! Try again.”

“I feel. I fucking *feel*!” Wow, I finally said it aloud—well almost.

But my allergic-to-more-than-a fuck best friend gets it. “Oh ho. Does he reciprocate?”

After overhearing his phone call yesterday, I’m doubtful. He has an agenda. And he’s hiding it from me. Does it involve me?

I don’t say any of it to Lori. He’s like a blood-thirsty guard Chihuahua. Don’t want to sic him on Rague. “I’ve been staying at his place after Dick threw me out and I got sick, and Rague has been quite...attentive.”

“I beg your fucking pardon? There’s too much bloody excitement I’m not involved in. You couldn’t wait for my return?” he yells, and again: phone... large space...my ear.

I retell the last few days to him while he lets out a few weird expletives.

“You can’t go back to Dick, Ollie. I will go Rio Carnival crazy on your ass.” I think he means it as a threat. “If your next fight isn’t a fair one, there must be something Dick has cunningly planned.”

“Sully is coming back in three days, and Dick is still his guardian. You know he has connections with the police. I can’t leave my little brother alone with that scum.”

“Fuck. How about Rague, can’t he do something? You said he crushed a man’s hand with his fist, for fuck’s sake. By the way, my briefs are getting very uncomfortably tight at the thought.”

“Lori, fucking stop.” I laugh. Because although it bugs me how he talks about Rague, I know flirting is just an innate part of him.

“I can’t ask him. Dick has friends everywhere, he could destroy Rague’s life.”

“I’m pretty sure your boyfriend can defend himself.”

*Boyfriend.* One word can hold so fucking much. But it tastes half-bitter with all the unanswered questions.

“That is the most moronic smile I have ever seen on your face.”

“How can you see my smile?” I look around, feeling watched all of a sudden.

“Jedi powers,” he answers drily.

“That doesn’t even make sense.” I slide my hand into the outside pocket of my backpack and pull out the keys.

“Rague and Ollie kissing in a tree, k-i-s-s...” His girly singing voice is cut off by a *brrr*.

“Where are you?” I ask.

“Fucking loath my boss.”

“I gather that from the thousand and one times you told me before.” I snicker.

“I’m going on a wild goose chase for a bloody pack of biscuits and freezing my perfect peach off!” he complains. “Oh, here is the store. I need to go.



Please don't make any life-altering decisions until I'm back. And send pictures," he quickly adds.

"Of?"

"His gigantic, misbehaving, trouser snake..." And click, I hang up on him. I swear Lori is made of blood, bones, and filthy thoughts.

I twist the key in the door and stop in the small entrance, noticing the alarm is off. Rague must be home. The thought makes my skin tingle all over, even though my brain is telling me to get a grip.

There's no answer when I call his name. I drop my backpack on a kitchen chair, hating to leave things on the *dirty* floor, and stop dead.

A guy with almond eyes and a head full of thick black hair is sitting on the sofa armrest in the living room, eating baby carrots from the plastic pack. *My baby carrots.*

"Finally. I thought you'd never end that phone call." His voice is deep and he sounds irritated, which is ludicrous since I'm pretty sure he forced his way into the house.

"Did you eavesdrop?" I ask, going back over the conversation with Lori to see if I said something incriminating.

"A little bit. Got bored. How do you say..." He stops and squeezes his eyes shut, seemingly trying to remember the right words. I take advantage of his distraction and grab a knife from the dish rack near the kitchen sink.

The guy snaps his fingers and looks at the knife and then at me. There's not a hint of caution in his eyes, should I feel offended? "Right place, wrong time."

Does he mean *wrong place at the wrong time*?

"Who are you? How did you get in?" I raise the knife between us. It's a steak knife, small but sharp. It could do some damage to the tiny guy.

“The real question is who *you* are. And locked doors never stopped me, never will.” He’s eyeing my body with interest now. Can’t he see the fucking blade I’m brandishing?

“If you think I’ll tell my name to the guy who broke into my house, you must be delusional on top of a criminal.”

“*Your* house? Really?” He tosses a baby carrot inside his mouth and proceeds to casually chomp on it, making my eye twitch. He doesn’t look afraid of me in the least.

I don’t correct him.

“So, you’re with Rague.”

“Define *with*.” This is too surreal. I’m having a conversation with the guy who most certainly wants to rob...wait a minute, he knows Rague?

“I thought he was only into paying for sex. But you don’t look like a gigolo.” He looks down at himself. “Then again, looks can be...betraying?”

I frown at his wording. “Deceiving?”

“Yeah, that.”

Let’s rewind. *Gigolo*? Rague pays for sex? That can’t be right? *Right*? He can have anyone...

Then I remember his ambivalence about being touched. The way he expects me to follow his orders when we fuck. The no kissing rule. His hesitancy the first time we did.

The sound of crunching paper from the kitchen makes me turn around. The fridge door is wide open and the guy is clawing at a bar of dark chocolate. How did he move without me noticing?

“Can you stop stealing food?” He’s like a feral squirrel.

“Sorry, my blood sugar is low. Do you guys have any sweet potato?”

“No. But...if you tell me your name and what the hell you’re doing here, I’ll show you where the honey jar is.”

He huffs with what sounds like frustration. “There’s nothing I can’t find. But I’m exhausted, and you’ll hear my name as soon as Rague comes lumbering through that door. I’m Clover. Like the lucky plant.”

“The wild weed,” I deadpan.

“Weed.” He scrunches his large nose—the only large thing about him.

“Do you and Rague...?” Just the thought of him being something to Rague makes bile come up my throat.

Clover smiles. Then laughs. “Oh, you’re serious. No. I work with him sometimes.”

Then it clicks. I remember Rague saying the name Clover on the phone.

“On Lenny Berko.” I try to sound confident.

“He told you about it?” He’s looking at me curiously.

I shrug, placing the knife on the counter and turning to the cabinets over the sink to grab the jar of honey and a bag of cookies.

“Yum!” With a light, agile jump, he sits on the island, then yanks the food out of my hands and starts dunking the cookies directly into the jar. The messenger bag around his torso, just like the rest of his clothes—tight pants, boots, and parka—is black.

“Are you some kind of ninja?” I raise a brow toward him, sliding a couple of fingers inside my pockets and leaning my hip on the counter in front of him.

He takes his time chewing and swallowing before he gives me an answer.

“Ninja are a secret society, I’d have to kill you,” he explains, keeping a serious face.

I sigh at his silliness and grab two cans of soda from the fridge, sliding one near him.

He gives me a closed-mouth smile and plucks the can up so quickly I barely see it. I blink a few times. I feel wary around Clover but not in danger anymore. He's odd, but intriguing.

"I didn't find the files," he says. *Files?* "Lenny only had a bunch of porn magazines and some documents all related to the gym inside his desk drawers. No illegal fights, no link to the boys' deaths. He really hates technology and cleanness—his office is a pigsty." He keeps going but the words *boys' deaths* echoes in my head. What is he talking about? What boys?

"Rague and Rami need to keep getting information from the small fish around the gym and fight ring." Like Dick and...me.

I hear the click of a key twisting in the front door lock before it opens and two men holding hands walk inside. My eyes fall on the knife on the counter.

Clover turns to them and says, "The psycho and his mate are here."

"Clover." The tall, incredibly handsome, and very broody-looking guy tilts his chin at him, not the least bit offended by the little ninja's words. "And it's my fiancé." He lifts their laced hands to show a ring covered in red stones. It's beautiful, but is that supposed to be an engagement ring?

"The art of love. Once you've secured the battlefield, you must then massacre the enemy," Clover recites.

"That's the *Art of War*," the broody guy corrects him.

"Sounds like good advice to me." My words get a curious, narrowed look from him.

“Hi, Clover, very nice to finally meet you. You too, Ollie,” the tall, blond, and sweet blue-eyed man addresses me. “I’m Michael and this is Raph, Rague’s brother.”

“Oh.” Realization spreads through me. Rague said he has a lot of brothers. I suddenly feel a bit nervous to meet his family. “Hi. You’re the doc that checked on me when I was sick. Thank you.”

“U wer fiku?” Clover’s mouth-full mumble is incomprehensible.

Raph pulls a chair away from the kitchen table and sits, patting his thigh to *invite* Michael to do the same—on him. Despite glaring at his fiancé, Michael drops unceremoniously onto his lap.

“Caveman.”

“You love it. Love me,” Raph retorts matter-of-factly. These two are a weird couple.

“Rague is not here,” I say.

“We know,” Raph replies, staring intensely at me. His green eyes look empty unless he’s watching his fiancé. I don’t shrink back under his piercing gaze, though. Fuck that. And him for trying to make me feel intimidated.

“He’s coming,” Michael says, then probably seeing the staring duel we are having, he adds, “Don’t mind Raph, he’s a bit...unsociable.”

“Not true. I’m all unsociable, babe.” He removes his eyes from me to focus on Michael.

Clover snorts. “That’s a can of spiders I never want to open.”

“Worms. A can of worms,” I tell him.

Clover gives me a cute frown. “Why wouldn’t I want to open that? Worms are harmless.”

I chuckle, hearing Michael do the same.

“You’re absolutely right, Clover.” Michael tells him, while I grab a wet cloth from the edge of the sink and move close to Clover.

Some honey from the cookie he’s holding drips on the counter between his spread legs. How can a guy so agile and light-footed be this messy? He’s getting all sticky.

Rague chooses that moment to walk in. He’s holding at least five bags in each hand and his gaze focuses quickly on us—specifically on my hand between Clover’s thighs. His jaw ticks. Not a good sign. He only does that when he’s horny—which is very improbable at the moment—or pissed off. But I can’t find it in me to care. I have conflicting emotions inside me. I can’t stop myself from feeling hurt and pathetically hopeful.

He drops the bags at the entrance, and in three strides, he’s on me. I open my mouth to give him a snarky retort with maybe a hint of vitriol—but his big arms lift me, and he kisses me. Not a light peck, but a full-on, claiming, whole-tongue kiss. And I cannot resist. His musky smell, rough manhandling, and hard body against me, it’s the devil’s ultimate combination.

When he pulls his head back, I’m out of breath. I hear a whistle, which reminds me there’re other people with us. And I realize that my legs have wrapped themselves around Rague’s waist at some point and that we are standing near the dining table now. Five feet away from the island where Clover is rolling his eyes, not even a little intimidated by Rague. It seems nothing intimidates the little guy.

“I got it, he’s yours,” he tells Rague. My body turns rigid, remembering Clover’s earlier words and that damn phone call. “Stop the jealous shit. Ollie’s not even my type.”

“Hey! I’m everybody’s type.” I sound affronted, and I am. Even though Rague is using me to get information on Lenny...probably. Most likely.

“Not when your huge boyfriend is ready to incinerate whoever stands within a seven-foot radius of you.” Clover hops down off the island like a graceful cat and goes to wash his sticky hands at the kitchen sink.

“Boyfriend?” Michael repeats.

“Rague just sucked his face off. That guy is definitely his,” Raph huffs annoyedly.

That *guy* is me, right? Again the word *boyfriend*. I just acknowledged that I have feelings for him and he probably doesn’t feel the same about me.

I drop my legs from Rague’s waist and try to take a step back, but his arms are like steel poles around me. I glance up, but his eyes are focused on Clover.

“Ten feet,” he growls, pulling me even closer to him. “Ten-foot radius.”

Damn. I like it. This crazy possessiveness of his. I want it. But I remind myself that he lied to me, if not about the way he feels about me, about everything else.

“Let me go,” I breathe on his chest and squeeze my grip on his biceps.

He doesn’t. I know he heard me because he stiffens against me.

“Rague, let me go,” I repeat, putting more conviction in my voice.

So very slowly, he obliges, and I can finally take a few steps back. I don’t like the sudden distance, and from the look of his balled-up hands and the throbbing vein on his forehead, Rague doesn’t either. But I need to have a clear mind when we talk.

“I didn’t find anything in Lenny’s office. I still took pictures and sent them to Rami. I also planted a couple of bugs. You have ears now.”

Rague doesn't stop Clover from revealing their schemes. He just grunts, but his searching gaze is on me, probably trying to read my reaction. I keep my face blank, but I know my eyes are betraying my emotions.

Is he a PI? Who does he work for? Raph and Michael don't seem surprised by any of this. Are they involved, too? Fuck, I need answers.

"Next time, let me find some good snacks, or I'll stop my house calls," Clover complains while heading for the front door. No goodbye, then.

"We all wish you'd stop those house calls," Raph grumbles.

Michael's eyes go from me to Raph, before he jumps off his fiancé's lap and pulls him toward the door. "We are going, as well. Ollie, a pleasure. Rague...good luck."

The click of the front lock lets us know we are alone now.

"Are you an undercover cop or something?" I cut straight to the chase.

"Or something," is his short, vague as fuck, frustrating reply.

"Did you get closer to me to get information?" I clench my jaw tight, waiting for the painful blow to arrive.

"That was the idea." Damn, it stings—badly. But his phrasing gives me some hope.

"Was?"

"Come here." His voice is low but filled with command.

I just stare at him without making a move. The familiar heat spreads inside me. I want to follow his order, to let him touch me and forget about everything, but I also want the truth. And fighting him is equally hot.

"Ollie." My name sounds like a warning. His voice is strained. His eyes full of fire, like he can barely tame the flames. Will they burn me if I get closer?

"Answer me! Or I swear to God, I'll leave right now," I bark, but my gaze is begging him to put me out of my misery.



The sound of his angry growl fills the room. “Did I ever give you the impression that I was trying to get information from you? Think about it, kitty.” He takes a step toward me, and I don’t back away. *Kitty*, he calls me kitty. I hate it, and fuck, it also makes me a bit loopy inside.

I shake my head. I know he’s right. I mean, Rague doesn’t even like to talk much.

“Clover said something about some boys’ deaths.”

“Seven boys between fifteen and nineteen drugged and beaten to death. The bodies were left to rot among trash.”

I gasp, lifting my hand to cover my open mouth. “Did Lenny kill them?”

“We aren’t sure.”

He takes another step, like he can’t help himself from coming closer to me. His white-knuckled fists are still near his thighs, his posture rigid.

“Is Dick involved? Richard Truman.” I refuse to call him my father. Drugs and violence are his favorite pastime.

“Don’t know. But you need to stay away from both of them.” He grits his teeth and keeps searching my face as if he’s desperately trying to find something there.

“Am I in danger?” Is Sully?

“Don’t want to risk it. Whoever is behind those kills is a callous, heartless and soulless piece of shit.”

“Is this real?” My voice comes out as a whisper, so I clear my throat and ask more firmly, “Between us. Is it real?”

“Ollie, you’re the most real thing in my life, and I won’t ever, ever let you go.” He snarls the last words, and my lungs stop working. “I omitted a few things, but with good reason. The main one was to protect you. I can’t let anything happen to you. I won’t.”

I can hear in his tone how much he means everything he says. He really cares. It's like a switch is flipped inside me. My shoulders slump, and I find myself cutting the distance between us. I jump, my legs curl around his waist, hands on his shoulders, and mouth to mouth.

The kiss, as always, is wild and full of passion. Any kind of resistance disappears. For the first time, I feel like I can let go of everything else and just trust that Rague will take care of me.

He pushes my legs down from his body. My fly comes open. The click of teeth as the zipper descends resonates in the silent living room. Then he tugs my shoes, pants, and underwear off. I stink after the day of work, but he doesn't seem to care when his nose sinks into my neck, inhaling deeply.

"You're perfect." There's this reverence in his voice and lust, heady lust as he squeezes my cock for the first time in his big, warm hand. I moan all my desire, and he takes it as an invitation to fondle my ass. He's never touched me like this before. Like he's enjoying it while trying to make it good for me.

"Gonna show you," he growls just before I'm lifted in the air, his hands squeezing my ass cheeks. My back hits the wall, and I slide up, up, up until Rague hauls my legs on top of his shoulders and my dick is lined up with his face. The sight of the head of my dick so close to his mouth forces precum out of the slit. His tongue darts out and licks it off, and a delicious shiver rushes down my spine. When my taste hits his tongue, a deep groan leaves his lips, and then he swallows me all the way down his inferno-hot throat.

"Ragueeee!" I scream his name like a prayer. I'm not as huge as him, more average, but still a decent size. He should gag on it, but he doesn't. Instead,

he swallows around me, making my eyes roll inside my head, and he groans all his pleasure when more precum oozes out.

He pulls back and sucks hard on the tip, his slick tongue rolling around hungrily. He takes me all the way back inside and starts a rough, fast tempo that is going to put an end to this embarrassingly quick. I can't believe how strong he is, holding me up on his shoulders while working me relentlessly. My balls hit his wet chin with every bob of his head, and the friction of his stubble on the sensitive skin is driving me crazy. My eyes move up to his, and what I see in his dark orbs almost makes me unload. Not because of the filthy, raw hunger aimed at me—although that never ceases to astonish me—but for the utter obsession so clearly visible in his piercing gaze.

I feel his fingers brushing against the underside of my cum sack. Rague gets them wet with the spit that is drooling from his mouth and then moves them to my puckered hole. He shoves two inside, my balls draw up, and I let go.

“Coming,” I warn him just a second before I unload. He swallows and swallows and then sucks on my sensitive head until I pull back. *Too sensitive.*

I have just enough time to smile down at him before I'm lowered, spun and bent over the kitchen table. Cheek pressed on the wooden surface, a small stool is placed under my feet. I hear the sound of his pants falling to the floor, but when I try to widen my legs, a growl tears its way out of his throat.

He pushes my ass up and brings my wrists around my back, holding them down with one hand. I turn and whimper, gasping for breath, seeing how heatedly he's looking at me in this subdued, obscene position.

Rague spits a slick mixture of saliva and semen into his hand. He does it again and shoves it between my squeezed thighs. Then he lets more saliva

fall on his cock, before his big hand wraps around it and starts slicking it.

“You’re so damn hot,” I blurt out, and it’s true. His lips twitch before he pushes his dick into the tight cavity formed by my thighs.

He’s wild and untamed with his thrusts, groaning like the beast he is. He hasn’t taken off his shirt, but I can see his pointy nipples and mighty pecs pushing against the thermal fabric. He has a blissed out, possessive look in his eyes that says, “I will wreck you,” as he stares at my ass bouncing with every pump, brows pinched tight, and jaw slack. My spent, sated cock starts growing once again under the feral fucking between my thighs.

“Your hole is all red and swollen.” Is that why he’s not fucking it? “Ollie.” Rague’s voice is a little more than gravel, filled with satisfaction. He tightens his hold on my wrists and spits on my back entrance before brushing his thumb over the sensitive skin. “I own it, don’t I?” I feel the saliva rolling down till it reaches his pumping dick going at the fake hole between my legs.

I glare at him, but it’s only an act, because I’m after one thing, and he gives it to me straight away. The first spank stings so damn good, followed by four more. When he stops, I wiggle my ass and whimper.

“Tell me who owns your ass and greedy mouth, and I’ll give you more.” His hard shaft suddenly slides under my balls, and I cry out. My dick is hard as a rock again. How does he do that?

“You!” I scream, feeling desperate tears coming down my face. Different emotions are attacking me all at once, and the desire is almost suffocating. I need him so much. So fucking much. He resumes the spanking until my ass cheeks are on fire and I’m a sobbing mess.

“Don’t you ever threaten to leave, Ollie,” he whispers near my ear. “I’m not that good of a man. You have no idea what I’m capable of.” His words of

warning inflame me even more. Because I know without a doubt that he's speaking the truth, but also that he'll never hurt me. His actions up until this moment have shown it to me over and over.

His thumb goes back to my hole and the tip slips inside, making me even more insane. He suddenly pulls me up from the table and holds me standing on the stool with my arms still secured behind my back, while his cock slides roughly between my legs.

"Watch," he orders. I look down. My angry dick is bouncing on my belly with every hard thrust of his hips, while his thick cockhead pushes its way between the flesh of my thighs over and over, dripping precum all over my skin.

"Spit on my dick. Make it nice and wet," he orders me, his breath so close to my cheek. I open my mouth and let the saliva fall on it, enjoying his groan of pleasure.

He pulls out and appears in front of me. Chest to chest. He slides his length in between my legs again and goes back to the feral rhythm of his thrusts.

"Squeeze those fucking thighs together." He makes a rumble sound that goes straight to my balls.

I shudder. He's so big, every part of him. Chest, arms, legs, cock. And I'm his prisoner. I feel so sexy and vulnerable at the same time. My hands are still held behind my back, and he is devouring my mouth, growling between my lips. Why is that sound so hot? Rague is not even talking, and yet, he turns me into a whimpering pile of need. I want to crawl inside his head, just like he's crawled inside mine.

Maybe I already did.

My cock is rubbing on his hard belly, smearing it with precum. He wraps his calloused fingers around it as his shaft massages the underside of my

balls more forcibly in this position. After only one pump of his hand, cum is pulsing out, sticky strands shoot between our bodies and trickle down his hand, making my whole body jerk. I ride my orgasm until my seed glistens all over the fabric of our shirts.

“Ohh, Rague,” I whisper, empty-headed.

His grip on my wrists loosens only slightly, and he moves his fingers covered in my cum to my hand, slicking it with it.

“Make a loose fist with your hand.” He positions it under my ass between my legs and with the next pump of his hips, the head of his cock slides inside it. “Just like that. Such a good boy!”

His forceful drives push me onto my tiptoes, and it’s not easy to keep my balance on the small stool. He suddenly lets go of my hands, grabs two handfuls of my ass and jackhammers his dick like a mindless dog in heat. His teeth close around my shoulder, and I can’t stop my free hand from clutching at the scarred skin of his back, while my other hand is still being used as a Fleshlight by Rague.

My thighs, my feet, arms, and neck ache, but I fucking love when he loses his mind like this. He suddenly turns rigid, roughly spreads my ass cheeks, and then I feel cum spurting on my ass crack, hole, and lower back.

“Give me those water-green eyes.” He’s still coming, his voice is strained and commanding. Can’t resist him like this. “Yes. Mmmm. Like tropical water around a faraway island. Ollie. My Ollie.”

I kiss my name from his lips, soft and slow and sweet, like I’ve never kissed anyone before.

Fifteen minutes later, we are on the sofa. The afterglow from two mind-blowing orgasms is buzzing lazily all over my body. I’m sitting on Rague’s lap, his chin on top of my head, his big body against my side. We took off

our shirts, and I can feel his bare skin against mine, his spent cock against my ass. One of my hands is on his pec, and even though I'm dying to explore the beauty of his strong chest, I don't.

"I meant it when I said I'm not a good person," he whispers.

My head goes back to memories of Dick and my shitty life. And then to the bliss of the last few days spent with him. "I've seen bad, Rague, and you're not it."

He grunts in disagreement. My yawn couldn't have been timed worse, and whatever he was going to say dissolves into a frustrated sigh.

"Do you really use gigolo...services?" I ask hesitantly. I haven't stopped thinking about it since Clover said it so casually.

"Yes." His voice sounds calm, but he tightens his arms around me.

"Why?" I ask softly.

"It served a purpose. I just wanted to get off. And those guys know what I like." Jealousy tries to rear its ugly head, but I slap it back where it came from.

"No touching, no kissing?"

"Among other things." He presses my hand on his pec, like he wants to show me that I'm different. I already know I am.

I open my mouth to question him more, when he asks, "How did you start fighting?"

"Been doing it for a while now. Dick, he knows people in that circle."

"Did he force you?"

"Not the way you're thinking. My brother...I need the money." To get away from this life. But Rague? Can I leave him behind?

"I got you, Ollie."

God, I wish it was true. But does he really? He wants me here, with a seventeen-year-old teen? Not likely.

I yawn again; we need to talk more, but exhaustion is quickly muddling my brain. Rague lifts me in his arms and for once, I'm too sleepy to argue.

I wake up sometime later with a pair of strong arms around me, my face and hands buried against miles of firm chest. It takes me a few seconds to realize I'm in Rague's bed.

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## Chapter 11

### *RAGUE*

When I wake up, it's morning. The light is seeping in under the curtains, illuminating the room. I turn my head and look at Ollie lying next to me. Head on the pillow, hand on my pec, and one leg on top of mine.

Sleeping with someone is new to me.

I slide my eyes down his slim body. Those powerful thighs felt so damn good last night. I wanted to fuck his ass, but he looked sore. Didn't want to hurt him. Not like that. He seemed to enjoy the BJ I gave him. Came fast. For my first time, I think I did good. Never felt like blowing one of the guys from the agency. But Ollie is mine. His taste, I want more of it on my tongue.

In his sleep, the constant smirk is absent from his full lips. His hair is flopping down over his cheeks, and I notice for the first time how long his lashes are. I want to see his eyes—and that beautiful brown imperfection inside one of them. They remind me of spring, of mountain, minty air, and

translucent, clear waters. They can turn from angry glacial-green to a sassy brilliant jade, to hooded emerald when shining with mind-blowing need.

I catch a glimpse of the reddened spots on his throat where I bit his skin last night. Couldn't stop myself. Ollie has the ability to turn me into an animal.

His hand on my pec doesn't make me feel uneasy anymore. I want him to touch me more, and I know he does too. I saw the need in his eyes and in his curled fingers, but he respects my limits—as much as he can. I couldn't have found a better person for me.

I still want to tie his hands over his head and force him to swallow my cock while I straddle his face, and then pound his ass ruthlessly, though. That kind of control over him makes me so fucking hard. Even more so knowing he'll let me.

Ollie's phone suddenly starts to ring from down in the kitchen. He jerks awake and sits up on the bed, blinking his eyes before glancing around. The frown on his face is adorable. It disappears too quickly when the sleepy veil is lifted from his foggy mind.

He turns his head to me and smiles. Such a warm smile, like he's truly happy to see me. Nobody has ever looked at me this way before.

His phone rings again, and his beautiful eyes widen with surprise. He scrambles off the bed and I watch as his bouncing ass disappears down the hallway.

I can't hear what he's saying from here, so I follow him. There's such warmth in his voice while he talks. "How's the trip?" But his tone is growing anxious the more he speaks. "What? When? Why didn't you call me? I'll pick you up." He sounds worried, nervous. "No. Fuck! Okay. I'm coming."

"What is it?" I ask him when he hangs up.

He blinks a couple of times before his gaze focuses on me. “Nothing. I need to go.” He averts his eyes, his voice flat.

It’s almost ridiculous how he thinks I’ll let him just go.

He hurries to the guest room and starts getting dressed. I forgot to give him the things I bought for him yesterday. The bags are still at the entrance.

“Where?”

“Out,” is his succinct reply.

“Who was on the phone?” I insist, not liking his defiance. My hands start to tingle.

“My brother, okay? He came back two days early from his trip. Influenza hit half of his class.”

So, he needs to pick him up. “Are you going to the train station?”

He slips his sneakers on without answering.

“Ollie, give me a fucking answer,” I growl warningly.

“What the fuck, you can’t force me,” he retorts, full of indignation.

“The fuck I can’t.”

“I’ll fight you.” He stands up and faces me. So damn fearless and sexy.

“Don’t expect anything less from you, kitty. But you’ll still end up on the bed with my cock so deep inside your hole, you’ll feel me in your throat.”

Pupils blown inside his eyes, he swallows loudly. That’s my horny kitty, always ready for me.

“Jesus, Rague, you can’t just…” he starts.

“You’re fucking mine, and I can do whatever I want with what’s mine,” I snarl.

He huffs haughtily, but his lower lip is trembling with want, and his eyes dart away, too scared to hope this is real.

“Mine, kitty. Haven’t I been clear enough? You think I fuck every man bareback? Never before—just like the blow job I gave you.” His mouth falls open with total shock at my confession. “Do you think letting you kiss me was an accident? Or touch me?” I stalk to him slowly and place his trembling hands on my pecs. I take a big breath and let myself enjoy the feeling.

“That first kiss was a claiming one. *You* claimed me in that parking lot, whether you like it or not. And I know you fucking do. You want to belong to me. And I protect what’s mine, Ollie, at all costs.” My fingers cradle his delicate nape—my hand covers the whole span of it—and sinks into his long hair. I love to see it down, a shiny mocha cascade. I yank his head back and attack his mouth with hungry lips and possessive twists of my tongue. His lust-drunk, half-lidded eyes focus on me when I break the kiss.

“Now, tell me what’s going on.”

Just when he opens his mouth, the doorbell goes off with a high-pitched chime.

Goddammit! I squeeze his nape and order him not to move. Then I grab a pair of pants from my room and yank them on, before stomping to the front door and yanking it open.

Rami.

“What’re you doing here?” I bark at him.

“Nice to fucking see you too, bro.” He salutes me with his middle finger.

“I tried calling you. Your phone must be dead.” He takes advantage of my distraction and sneaks inside my house.

“I think I know where the extra fights take place. The bugs Clover hid in the office was another one of my brilliant ideas. We need to stake out the place, though,” he continues.

“Can’t Serena keep an eye on it?” I ask.

“I wish. It’s in a dead zone. No cameras. Nada, amigo.” He opens my fridge and grabs a bottle of water.

“Fuck!”

“Put on a shirt and let’s go, Hulky.”

“Now?”

“Why aren’t you moving? Your lemon-sucking frown is more sour than usual.”

My eyes go to the guest room, and Rami’s eyebrow shoots up.

“You can leave him for a few hours, he isn’t going to run away from you.”

“Rami, fuck off,” I snarl, my furious tone warning him. I’m deadly serious.

“I’m parched. Let me drink this water, and I’ll leave. Maybe Gabe will come with me.”

He pulls out his phone, and after tapping on it a couple of times, he puckers his lips. “Oh, I was wrong.”

I take the bait, “What?”

“Ollie *is* running away from you.”

He turns his phone screen toward me where a red dot is moving on a map—away from my house.

“What the fuck? Is that Ollie?”

“Raph slid a tracker in his backpack yesterday.”

We brothers all have trackers under the skin behind our ears—mine is under my armpit—as a consequence of my disappearance a few years back after a red haze attack. It’s a precaution. It helped us find Raph when he was kidnapped a couple of months back. And Rami swore to use it only in case of emergency. I didn’t know they put one in Ollie’s bag, though.

“Why?” I try to contain my anger.

“I’m a worrier.” Rami’s unapologetic shrug is inviting me to punch him right in the nose. But I know there’s a hint of truth in his words. He does worry about us and tries to protect us as best he can.

I grit my teeth and run to the guest room. It’s empty, with the window wide open, the cold from outside turning it into a freezer. I can’t see Ollie out there.

I let out a feral growl. Where the fuck is he going? And why didn’t he wait for me?

I hear Rami calling me from the garage, and when I get there, my beat-up pickup is missing.

“Fuck!”

“The twunk you’re in lurve with stole your car.”

Rami really doesn’t know when to shut up.

“*You* can lie, but not your dick.”

I growl, making my way back to my room to get dressed.

Rami unfortunately follows me. “Or your eyes. A little elf told me your lemon-sucking frown disappears in mere seconds when Ollie is around.”

I huff.

“Okay, it was Michael.” *Why is he still talking?* “Oh, he stopped. I remember this address, why? Serena darling, help me remember.”

“Yes, Daddy.” Rami winces hearing the nickname the AI chose for him. He hates it. “Richard Truman lives on that property with his two sons, Oliver and Sully Truman,” Serena’s clear voice comes out of his phone.

Damn it! The thought of Ollie near that son of a bitch of his father makes my guts twist painfully..

“What did you do?” Rami asks with a hint of accusation.

“Nothing!” *Why didn’t Ollie accept my help? How many times do I have to tell him that he’s mine?* “I have to go get him.” And spank him till he can’t sit anymore.

“Need backup?” His tapping away on his phone.

I appreciate Rami’s offer, even though he’s an exasperating fucker. We brothers are always available for one another, and in case one is unreachable, there’re five more to take his place. Still, I want to do this myself.

“No. You got the stake out, that has to be your priority.”

“My family is my priority.” When he uses this no nonsense tone, I know he’s serious, which is quite rare for him. “Call me if you need anything. And take the Jeep. Serena inserted the address into your navigation already,” he adds before leaving.

I make my way to the garage. The keys for my Jeep Wrangler are on the hook on the wall. I grab them and swear to fucking God that I’ll never let Ollie leave me again.



When I arrive at my destination in record time, my pickup is parked a couple of blocks away. Did Ollie go into another house? No, Rami would



have let me know.

I get out of the Jeep, placing my feet down on the cracked asphalt. I leave my jacket inside the car and glance at the ramshackle house in front of me. It looks as if the owner had simply given up on trying to make repairs two decades ago. The morning light shines over the dirty windows and small, littered front yard, intensifying the squalor enveloping the place. The whole area, actually.

The front door is ajar, but I don't hear voices coming from inside.

"Hey!" Someone whisper-yells. "Ralph!" A short guy with big curls, emerald-green shorts, black tights, high boots, and a tight fleece jacket is coming my way. He's holding a baseball bat against his chest.

I frown at him.

"It starts with an R, that I'm sure of. Roger? Ringo?" He stops in front of me, and I have to lower my head further down to look at him. "Sorry, I forgot your name."

I recognize him. "You followed me home that day with Ollie."

"Yes, we stalked you," he corrects me, not looking ashamed in the least. His light brown eyes seem intrigued by me. "I'm Lori, Ollie's bestie...and you're...Rudolf?"

"Rague."

"Right. Rague. Sorry, but that's a weird fucking name." And I thought Ollie had no filter. "Did Sully text you?"

"No. I'm looking for Ollie."

"Is he here too? I tried calling him, but the wanker isn't picking up. And I need some backup in case Micro Dick has company," he says, looking me over. When I raise an amused brow at him he explains, "Sully, Ollie's

brother, texted me to come here ASAP. Don't know what's going on, but it's not good."

"Stay here. I'll get them out." I turn toward the house and start walking.

"No fucking way." I've lost enough time chatting, so if Lori wants to come, I'm not going to stop him. Need to get to Ollie.

"Stay behind me," I instruct him.

"Won't be difficult, you're ginormous, mate." The way he talks is...odd.

We draw closer to the front door, and the sound of laughter and muted music drift from inside.

"Do you have a gun? A knife? Micro Dick's friends are packing sometimes, watch out." Lori whispers, as I slowly push the door open. My carving knife is strapped to my calf.

An old sofa and an ancient armchair are the first things I see entering the house. The plastic table is filled with cans and empty bottles. The carpeted floor under my feet is filthy, stained in many places, the small kitchen on the left littered with takeout containers and dirty dishes.

Is this the hellhole where Ollie has been living? His overt cleanness and tidiness, is it because of the grime and neglect he was raised in? The anger tastes bitter as it rises quickly inside my throat. It demands an outlet, and I hope I'll find one in the house soon. The low, shitty music coming from the small corridor on my right seems like a good lead to follow.

I leave Lori on the threshold and walk into the empty room. When I round the sofa, I realize there's someone sitting on the floor. A boy. His back is to the sofa, he's sniffing softly, rubbing the blood under his nose. His clothes are ill-fitting. Big glasses perch on his upturned nose, brown duct tape wrapped around the bridge. He's barely in his teens, and when his fearful

eyes—one light brown, one very familiar light green—lift to me, I know without a doubt this is Sully.

Eyeing his bruised neck and bleeding nose, I understand why Ollie came here in such a rush. Protectiveness is beating against my sternum, and I know that Sully will be under my care from now on.

“Rague?” Lori whispers my name.

Sully’s eyes widen with surprise. “You’re Rague?” His voice is hesitant and high, he reminds me of a little mouse.

I nod. “You know about me?”

“Ollie said you’re a beast in the fighting ring.” His breathing sounds choppy.

“Are you okay?” I ask, looking at his chest heaving frantically. “I won’t hurt you. I’m here to help.”

I hear movement behind me, and then Lori’s head of curls appears.

“Sully!” Lori slides his tiny body under my arm and kneels near the relieved boy. The worried gazes between the two men hint at a close relationship. “Are you having one?”

Sully nods, looking pale. Lori curls an arm around the boy’s skinny torso and pulls him up on his feet.

“Help me.” He glares at me while trying to hold the taller body upright. I slide my arms under Sully’s long legs and skinny back, and lift him up easily. Unlike Ollie, his brother is all skin and bones.

“He’s having a slight panic attack. Take him outside. Fresh air can help.”

I follow Lori’s instructions, remembering Sari used to have them when he was a kid. I carry Sully all the way to my Jeep, open the door, and sit him on the back seat, one leg in, one out.

Lori holds his hand in his.

“I’mmm fff-fine. O-Ollie,” Sully says shakily, pointing a trembling finger at the house.

“How many with him?”

He raises three fingers.

“I’ll get him out,” I promise, and leaving Lori to take care of the boy, I rush back inside. My fury is sizzling under my skin. I’ll kill whoever caused Sully’s panic and any other motherfucker who touched Ollie.

When inside the house again, I move to the hallway. I pass a bathroom and then a bedroom. It’s small and cold, and the ceiling has a huge water spot on one side. There’s only a dirty mattress on the floor with a couple of backpacks on top of it—one is Ollie’s. Is this his bedroom? This humid, freezing closet?

I hear a thump and then a bump coming from the wall on the left. The music is definitely coming from the room next door.

I stop in front of the thin wooden door, more laughter coming from inside. I focus my eyes on the lock, firmly planting my left foot on the floor, I bend my other leg, creating a forward momentum and give the door a powerful kick. The hinges give out, the lock breaks, and the door falls down on top of someone.

Ollie’s eyes fall on mine with wide-eyed astonishment. “No,” he mouths. His lip is split and bleeding. My shirt—that he’s wearing—is torn on the shoulder and his hair is a mess, like someone has grabbed it while hitting him. He’s against a wall, Richard Truman standing a couple of feet from him. A lit cigarette hangs between his lips and a gun is pointed at me. Another man is sitting on the bed, a beer can in his hand, a bag of pills on the sheet near his outstretched leg. He looks high and like he was enjoying the show.

“Who the fuck are you?” he asks me. My growling reply makes him squirm.

My gaze goes back to Ollie. His hand is pressing on his stomach and his face is scrunched up in pain. Still, all he worries about is his brother. “Sully?” he asks me.

I nod reassuringly, unable to say a word. I’m trying to calm myself down, but seeing my kitty hurting and having the man who did it a few feet away from me is like pouring fuel on my rage. The pain starts to spread inside my head, and I know that this time I won’t be able to stop it.

“Your whiny brother is fucking fine. I barely touched him.” Dick dares to sound annoyed. I feel my nostrils flaring. My hands clenching. My chest rumbling.

Dick takes a long puff from his cigarette. And my aching head reminds me of the small round burns on Ollie’s chest. Cigarette burns.

He eyes me up and down. “I saw you at Lenny’s gym. Who are you? Tell me why the fuck you’re in my house before I shoot you.”

“No! He’s nobody. Let him go. I’ll fight Scorpion,” Ollie pleads. My kitty should only beg me and my cock. Nobody else.

My head is turning muddy. It’s happening. *Fuck*. The pain has reached my chest, rushing down, invading my body. It hurts. I’m trying to cling to the present, to Ollie. But the more I look at his hurting, watery, worried eyes, the more I can’t stop it.

“I’m going to fucking kill you,” I almost roar at Dick.

“Get in bloody line!” Lori growls like a small poodle from behind me. He’s holding the wooden bat out in front of him.

Seeing his friend, Ollie takes a step forward. His father turns and backhands him so hard, Ollie hits his hip hard on the wooden table near him before

falling on it. “Don’t fucking move, you little shit.”

Without hesitation, I jump onto the fallen door—enjoying the moans coming from the man still underneath—and grab Dick’s hand as he fires a bullet. I hear a scream. My shoulder suddenly throbs, but it’s nothing compared to the agony I’m feeling inside.

I squeeze his fingers until he drops the firearm on the floor, and I kick it near the bed—where I get a glimpse of Lori straddling the other guy and punching him repeatedly.

I wrap my hand around Dick’s neck and lift him clear off his feet, growling in his face. “You dared harm what’s mine. I am going to have so much fun with you, you walking, talking, useless sack of shit.”

I look at Ollie. His teary eyes are on me. Dick takes advantage and spits on my cheek. I raise him higher in the air and then toss his body against the wall. Plaster falls down. I relish in the sound of a bone or two cracking when he drops to the floor with a whimper of pain.

“Lori, take Ollie away. Now!” I snarl, keeping my eyes on the shithead on the floor.

“No, Rague!” I hear Ollie screaming, but I don’t look at him. In the corner of my eye, I see Lori trying to pull him out of the bedroom and my feral kitty fighting against it.

“Leave. Now!” I yell, so fucking worried I’ll hurt Ollie if he stays.

Then everything stills. I feel the blood slowly pumping in my veins, each heartbeat thumping inside my chest, the excruciating hurt overwhelming my body.

The red haze fills my vision. I vanish, leaving only space for my anger. My last conscious thought is filled with hope that Ollie got out safely.

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## Chapter 12

*OLIVER*

*Leave. Now!*

Chills spread over my skin. The tone of his voice had been furious, dangerous, and etched with something that told me he was suffering. The bullet Dick shot looked like it only scraped his outer shoulder. It must have hurt, but the pain in his voice sounded agonizing.

“I’m fine, Lori. Stop fussing!” Sully is sniffing annoyedly at him.

“I know. I know. But Papa Lori needs to be sure.”

“It’s more like Papa Lori feels guilty for leaving Sully in the car while he was having fun beating up scum,” Sully retorts.

“You were fine!” Lori quips.

“Exactly,” Sully smirks at him.

Another scream comes from the house, and I stop my pacing, turning my face to Lori.

“I need to go back,” I croak. There’s a lump in my throat growing with anxiety.

My best friend replies, “Raul...”

“Rague,” both Sully and I say at the same time.

“He told us to leave. Micro Dick was the only one standing. The other two guys were out,” he reminds me, turning a devilish smile to his own swollen knuckles. “And he can take him easily.”

“There was something off,” I insist. “I need to go to him.”

“Go.” Sully nods at me. He really looks fine—apart from the bruise on his face and caked blood under his nose. Fucking Dick! But the color is back on his cheeks and he isn’t trembling. The panic attack was light.

“Alright, I’m coming with you, but let me get the other bat from my car first.” He grabs his from the ground.

“Lori...”

“No. It’s not up for discussion. If you go in there without me I’ll tickle your feet until you pee yourself—again.” He gives me an evil look and then jogs away.

“So, Rague. Is he a friend?” Sully asks.

My head snaps his way, and I know he’s already guessed the answer.

“No. He’s...more.” It’s not much, but I’m still coming to terms with what I’m feeling. With the sensation of wrongness I felt when I sneaked out of Rague’s house. The unbearable hollowness that grew with the miles I drove away from him, as if every cell in my body felt the painful distance I was putting between us.

And then he appeared like a damn dark knight, all broody and angry, and I came this close to purring when I saw him lifting Dick in the air. Fuck, maybe the kitty nickname is fitting.

Sully is smiling at me. “I like him. He’s like the good giant.”

I snort. But my humor dies as I hear a loud snapping noise, followed quickly by a cracking one, and then a deep moaning sound reminding me of wood breaking all coming from the house.

Thankfully, Lori comes back, handing me a wooden bat. He’s holding one as well.

“Why do you own two bats?” Sully’s puzzlement is justified by the fact that Lori hates sports. He only watches rugby to ogle the players.

“Protection, you twit.”

“For your car?” my brother asks, confused.

I don’t give my best friend the opportunity to reply. “Sully, lock yourself in the Jeep,” I order him. As soon as he nods, I run toward the house.

I’m not prepared for the destruction reigning in the living room. The sofa is leaning vertically against the kitchen counter. The armchair has been torn in half, white puffs of stuffing are spread all over the carpet among broken glass from the TV screen and empty cans. One wall has a huge hole in it, like someone punched it repeatedly.

“Fuck!” Lori is pointing to my right where—what I think is a bloody head—emerges through a gap in the wall that separates the bathroom from the living room. The *head’s* eye sockets seem empty under all the blood.

“He pierced the asshole head through the bloody wall after fucking eye-gouging him,” my friend whispers, his voice reflects how baffled I feel.

“Are you sure you want to keep going?”

My fear spikes tremendously, and my grip on the wooden bat tightens. But I have to check that he’s okay. “We need to find Rague,” I say with as much conviction as I can. That’s when the noise starts.

*Thump. Thump. Thump. Thump*

“What is that?” he asks. “It’s like...” The sound of an object hitting something—hard.

I gesture for him to follow me. We pass the bathroom, the door is open, and I see the rest of the body of the guy whose head is in the living room, hanging lifeless against the broken plaster.

“We’ve entered a *Kill Bill* movie set.” I hear Lori swearing some more, but I continue walking until we enter Dick’s room. The air is heavy and almost suffocating. There are splatters of blood everywhere. The door is still on the floor, but a few feet away from the threshold. There’s a man on the bed with his neck and one leg at unnatural angles. His eyes are open and unseeing.

Dick, or what’s left of him, is sitting on the floor in a pool of blood, his back to the bed. His arms have been cut off and one is lying near him—every single finger crushed. Both legs are broken, white bones sticking out, and there’s a huge scarlet spot on his groin. His head is caved in, his face a crimson shapeless, pulpy puree. I feel my gag reflex coming to life and quickly cover my mouth with my hand while averting my eyes. It’s not like I’m sorry for him. He deserved it. All of it. Maybe more.

My gaze finds his other arm near the broken stereo in the corner.

“Bloody fucking burning blazing hell,” I hear Lori slowly enunciating every word at the horrid sight.

*Thump. Thump.*

The loud noise makes us spin around. I drop the bat on the floor when I see Rague standing, facing the wall. He’s bashing his head over and over against the wall, growling like a caged animal. He’s hitting it so hard that cracks are starting to appear and the plaster is turning crimson.

“Rague!” I call to him, and he freezes.

He's panting like a bull, his shoulders rising and falling spasmodically. He pushes himself off the wall and turns my way. A horrified whimper leaves my mouth as dread and shock fill my chest.

He's smeared with blood. His face, hands, clothes, everything is red. There's a cut on his forehead that's bleeding. A knife is sticking out of his left thigh and long, deep scratches cover his forearms. His hands are puffy and covered in cuts as they hang at his sides.

Oh my God, this is all my fault. He got hurt because of me. To save *me*.

I take a hurried step toward him, but stop when I look into his eyes. They're black as night, burning with fury. Not a smidge of humanity in their depths. He looks completely...lost. There's no trace of the Rague I know anywhere. He's not sporting his usual frown. His body is vibrating with tension and fury. I've never seen him like this before. In the fighting ring, he's a machine, precise and cold but conscious of his surroundings.

This person in front of me is consumed by rage. Judging from the massacre he left behind, he went on a killing spree. I glance at Dick, or at what is left of him—Rague must have kept hitting him even after Dick stopped struggling, stopped moving at all. My stomach is protesting again.

"What the hell happened?" Lori fidgets from one foot to another, and Rague's eyes snap to him. His nostrils flare, sweat rolling down his face, lips curled up, showing his teeth. The same lips that make me stare with wonder when he tilts them into a smile. But he's a feral beast now. And doesn't seem to recognize us.

My heart beats out of control, and I'm unsure of what to do. I need to try something, though. So, I slowly step away from Lori, bringing Rague's attention back to me. He's huffing, hands balled up into fists, clenching and

unclenching at his sides. His jaw works back and forth. His piercing, furious gaze bores into me.

I take a hesitant step toward him. He snarls, but I slowly raise my palms up, hoping he'll see me as no threat.

"Do you feel suicidal today?" Lori hisses.

But I ignore him and take another step. Steady and slow. I glance at the knife stuck into his thigh. It looks painful, but he doesn't seem to sense it. Another step. And another. Rague's alert eyes never waver from mine. There's only a few inches between us now. I'm still showing him my hands, which are slightly shaking, not for fear of him, but of failing him.

The smell of pennies is strong; it covers his usual musky scent. His aggressive, continuous growling sounds like a warning I'm very stupidly ignoring. I tentatively push my right palm forward until my fingers lightly brush his pec. He stiffens but doesn't flinch. His nostrils flare again, his eyes narrowing on my face.

"Rague. Shhh. It's okay." I move the palm little by little over the hard muscle while I make soothing noises.

The fabric under my fingers is damp, but I don't care. I'm used to blood. I just hope it's not all his. His body is rigid, shaking with what looks like uncontrollable anger. I can feel his heart beating furiously and also the warmth radiating from his skin. He continues to snarl at intervals, like a wary animal ready to attack. And although a primal, scared shitless part of me is screaming to run, I stay put and don't show him any fear.

We stay like that for a few minutes, facing each other, the only point of contact my hand over his heart. His chest is moving against my fingers with every heavy, loud breath he takes.

“Rague.” My voice breaks. I don’t know if he’s listening to me. There’s no evidence of understanding on his face. But I keep talking. “It’s me. Your kitty. It’s—it’s me. I’m here.” Same as he’s been for me when I needed him. “I don’t know what kind of demons you’ve been fighting against, but I’ll wait with you until you find yourself again. As long as it takes.” I won’t let him struggle alone. I’ll stand right by his side.

Something abruptly changes in him. He utters a long, unbearable, grievous howl, and I have a glimpse at what’s hidden behind all that anger: it’s a world of agonizing pain.

It’s gone with my next blink, but I can hear my heart breaking. I’m gutted by the brief peek at his excruciating torment. Absolutely devastated by the suffering he’s enduring.

His breath falters, and his eyes seem to clear and quickly fill with regret and hopelessness. A tear drips down his cheek, and then the shaking starts. Rague’s body is suddenly hit by wild shivers. His eyes roll back, and he folds in on himself, starting to drop to the floor. I instinctively try to keep him up, pulling him on top of me. *Bad idea.*

“Fuck!” I hear Lori’s voice right next to me. But even with his help, Rague’s body is too heavy, and we fall hard on the old carpeted floor in a tangle of limbs—with a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound giant. His huge chest cushions my fall, but my knees get all the brunt of it.

“Ollie,” Lori’s wheezing makes me open my eyes.

“Shit! Are you okay?” I ask him. My hands are cupping Rague’s head. I must have automatically tried to protect it. I’m so fucking glad I did.

Lori nods, removing Rague’s big arm from his shoulder. “I have a newfound admiration for you.” He takes a big breath and sits up. “You’re

fucking brave for risking your life every time you let him fuck you. Death by rockslide isn't that hot."

"Because dying can be hot?" I retort with irritation.

I place Rague's head delicately on the floor and try to wipe some of the blood from his forehead. I can't believe he harmed himself like this.

He's unconscious but still breathing. I'm out of my fucking mind with worry. He's shaking and drool is rolling out the corner of his mouth.

"What happened?" My brother's panicky voice cuts through, and my head snaps toward him. What the fuck is he doing here? He looks pale as a ghost.

"I told you to stay in the car!"

Sully takes a couple of steps on the fallen door and trips on the doorknob almost falling on Lori.

"He's convulsing!" He points at Rague, ignoring my scowling. And fuck, he's right. His body is arching toward the ceiling like electricity is running through it.

"What's wrong with him?" Lori chokes out.

"I don't know." Fuck, what should I do? "What should I do?"

My worked-up tone seems to push my brother into action. "Clear the space around him of anything sharp or hard, so he doesn't injure himself. I took a very basic EMT class at school, looks like he's having seizures."

Sully kneels near Rague's leg where the knife is still sticking out.

I do as he says while I'm fighting with myself. I don't want my brother to be here, I want to shield him from all this horror, it's an innate urge.

"We need to call an ambulance," Lori states. "Fuck! I must have dropped my phone."

"Mine is in my bedroom. Backpack," I tell him, not wanting to leave Rague's side. The seizures have stopped, but he's shaking again.



“The wound in his leg stopped bleeding, which means that the blade missed the femoral artery. Hold his thigh down. I’ll take the knife out.” I breathe with a little relief; my brother is used to patching me up. He’s good at this. Rague doesn’t even register me touching him, or the blade being jerked out of his leg.

Sully is pressing a pillowcase that he took from the bed on the wound when Lori comes back.

“You have three missed calls from Rami. Who’s Rami?”

“Rague’s brother.” I frown. I don’t have his phone number. Did Rague add it to my contact list?

“And we can’t call an ambulance,” Lori adds.

“Why? He needs medical attention. The seizures could come back,” Sully argues.

“How will we explain the gory massacre? I don’t want to end up in a four-by-four hole and never see the light of the day again.”

He’s right. How are we going to clean up this mess? I look at Rague, so vulnerable and defenseless, covered in blood. He’s my priority at the moment.

“Call Rami. And put it on speaker,” I hear myself saying. I’m confident in thinking that this isn’t the first time Rague’s gone on a rampage. He knew it was about to happen when he told me and Lori to leave the house. He was protecting us...from himself. Maybe his brother knows about it? They seemed quite close from the way Rague talked about him. Can Rami help him?

I crawl near Rague’s head and place a hand delicately on his curly hair.

“I’m here. I’m here,” I continuously murmur, uselessly. I don’t even know if he can hear me.

Rami's voice sounds too loud in the silent room. "Hey, Hulk whisperer, do you—"

I don't give him time to continue. "Rague went killing crazy and then had seizures and is now shaking. I don't know what to do. We can't call an ambulance..."

"Shiiiiit! Don't make that call." I hear another man's voice, and then Rami whispers, "Rague Hulked out." That's another way to describe the destruction around us. And I was right, this is not Rague's first brutal rodeo. "Hold on, Ollie. Gabe and I are coming." I search my mind...Gabe, Gabriel—Rague's other brother. "Are you okay? Did he hurt you?" Rami asks.

"No. He'd never hurt me," I bark at him.

There's a moment of silence and then Rami asks me to turn on the camera mode.

"I don't have a camera on my phone."

More shocked silence.

"Yes, my phone is fucking ancient!"

After a few seconds, the man I think is Gabe says, "Don't call an ambulance."

"I said I wasn't going to," I clarify.

"We should check if the police sent a car to Ollie's house," Rami says.

Lori snorts. "The only reason for crooked cops to come to this neighbor is to fuck or get high. Not even Santa Claus wastes his time here."

"Who's there?" Gabe asks, not at all amused.

"Lori, Ollie's friend."

"Are you okay, as well?" Rami must be driving and fast. I hear honking and car tires screeching.

“Better than the guy whose head went through a wall.” Sully winces at Lori’s reply while I keep caressing Rague’s hair. My head is filled with dread and dark thoughts.

There’s more silence before I hear Rami talking in the background. “Serena, who’s closer to Rague’s whereabouts?”

“Michael and Raph are closer,” a woman answers back.

“Call Raph, tell him to go. ASAP,” Rami instructs her.

“We are coming, Ollie. Just stay with Rague. Keep his head steady, and if he stops breathing, do mouth to mouth. Can you?”

“I can. I did it before to one of my father’s girls who overdosed. It didn’t save her though.” My voice chokes at the end. The memory of her pale face and unmoving lifeless body is still vivid in my head. What if the same happens again? What if I can’t save him? I can’t lose Rague. I just can’t.

“I can as well,” my brother replies, taking my hand and squeezing it in his, his eyes searching mine with concern when I turn to look in his direction.

“I’m Sully.”

“You’re Ollie’s brother,” Rami says. “Fuck, how many people are there?”

“Dead ones included? Seven,” Lori’s dark humor is not helping the situation.

More swearing comes out the other side of the phone line.

“Cut it out, Lori.” He opens his mouth like he might verbally lay into me, but then shakes his head.

“Serena, we need to start the cleanup protocol.” I hear Rami, and then the same woman’s voice replying.

“Is he still shaking?” Gabe inquires. He sounds so toneless. Is it an act for our sake? How can he be so calm?

“Yes, and it doesn’t seem to be lessening. It’s been five minutes already,” Sully answers. More saliva is trailing down the side of Rague’s mouth, and I wipe it away with my knuckles.

“Michael will give him a sedative as soon as he gets there. He’s three minutes away. The convulsions usually come back until we sedate him.”

As soon as he’s finished talking the seizures start up again. His body, arms, and legs flex, extend, contract, and tremor for endless minutes. I feel so fucking useless. A scary, desperate feeling creeps into my chest, making my lungs feel too small. How can I help him? *How?*

Rague’s body turns stiff and then the involuntary small twitches start again. While Rami talks, I lie down on the floor on my side and push my body and face as close as I can to Rague. I hope he can feel that someone is here. That he’s not alone. Just like I wasn’t when he took care of me. I remember him singing to me and how much he likes it. He said it gives him peace. I start humming near his ear. I don’t know if he can hear me, but doing something for him soothes the waves of anxiety that keep trying to drown me.

The notes soon find a melody, and I’m softly singing Pink’s “Love Me Anyway,” realizing while the words leave my lips, that it’s true. I love Rague. The attentive, possessive, rough, obsessed man and also the pained, angry, lost beast. I love all of him. No matter what. And I’ll help him any way I can if he lets me.

“What is that?” I hear Rami ask.

“It’s Ollie, singing very badly to him,” Lori replies.

“Michael and Raph are there. We will be in ten.” Rami hangs up.

“God!” Just as Rami said, Michael and Raph suddenly appear on the threshold.

Michael hurriedly moves near Rague's twitching body. He opens a rectangular bag and pulls out a syringe. Removing the cap, he pushes up Rague's sleeve and injects the sedative in his arm. He slides the syringe back in the bag and grabs Rague's hand to check his pulse. The tattoo on Rague's wrist catches my eye again. Because now that I can see it clearly, I know that's not a tattoo, but a brand. The number six was burned into his skin.

A few seconds pass, and all his tense muscles quickly relax before my eyes. He finally calms down.

"Turn him gently on his side. It will help him breathe." Lori and I follow Michael's instructions as soon as Sully removes the pillow case, and Michael makes sure that the wound on Rague's leg doesn't bleed anymore.

"His heartbeat is strong. He's breathing easily. He'll be fine."

As I register Michael's words, the dam breaks, and I feel tears running down my face. My nails dig deep into my thighs through the fabric of my jeans, and I start sobbing. A huge boulder has been lifted from my chest, and all the fear filling it flies away. I feel so fucking relieved. Lori and Sully quickly envelop me in a group hug that makes me cry even more.

"Fuck." After a minute, they let me go, and I dry my teary cheeks on my sleeve, sniffing a couple of times more.

"Are you all okay? Any wounds you need me to check?" Michael flicks his gaze among us, pausing on Sully's bruised face and my split lip. But we shake our heads.

"I'm Michael, and that's my fiancé, Raph, Rague's brother. You must be Sully."

My brother nods shyly. His eyes are red. Did he cry, too?

"And you?"

“Lori, the friend.”

“Who’s that?” Raph asks, pointing at the mutilated corpse on the floor.

“Micro Dick,” Lori replies. “Their sperm donor. The other two were his friends.”

Raph and Michel don’t seem disturbed by the gruesome scene surrounding us. In fact, Raph is slowly studying the room and taking pictures.

Sully clears his throat, and I notice how hard he is trying not to look at the bed and the corpses. Now that Rague is fine, he’s taking notice of the horror again.

“Sully, go get all of your stuff and mine.” I give him an excuse to get out of here. “Lori, can you help him?” I exchange a look with my friend that says, “Check on him.” He nods and guides my brother out.

“As soon as Rami and Gabe are here, we’ll carry Rague to his Jeep,” Michael tells me.

I run my hand into Rague’s hair, not caring about the blood among the strands—and maybe something else. Not thinking about that.

“What was...this?” I wave my arm at the room. “What happened to him?”

“Let’s take Rague home, and we’ll talk.” Raph gives me a quick glance before he puts his phone close to his ear and starts talking, “No risk of someone seeing, the windows are all closed and dirty as fuck. I’ll check the neighbors now, but I don’t think we’re gonna have any problem in this area.”

“He’s going to be fine,” Michael softly tells me, getting my attention.

I nod, feeling another tear hitting my cheek. I look down at Rague and focus on his breaths as I start humming again.



Rague is sleeping tranquilly in his bed. The dim light coming from his nightstand illuminates his red cheeks and the cut on his forehead. I don't know how long I've been sitting on the edge of the bed, holding his bandaged hand, but my back hurts, so it has to have been a few hours.

Giving him a shower before laying him on the sheets had been a real challenge. Rami and Raph helped, but I got completely soaked. The bruises, cuts, and wounds covering his body made me almost cry again—this whole incident has turned me into a weeping mess. Michael took care of them, and I helped, but there were so many.

He's still unconscious. One of his mothers, Meg, said Rague would sleep for a while. The sedative is helping with that; his body needs to rest after the *red haze attack*—that's what she called the *Hulk out*.

His brothers went back to Dick's house to...*clean* it. They told me not to worry about it—whatever that means. I just felt something akin to gratitude overwhelming me since that meant I could stay with Rague. Lori and Sully have come to check on me from time to time. My best friend stayed to keep an eye on my brother—he would also never pass up the opportunity to ogle a group of fine men like Rague's brothers. A small smile tries to tilt my lips, but then the tears pool in my eyes once again.

What the fuck is happening to me? I feel like a cauldron bubbling with emotions.

I sigh. *He is fine*. I keep repeating those three words inside my head. It's so strange to see him this vulnerable, but even when comatose, I can feel his large commanding presence.

I look over at Pink. Sully found her in the abandoned house three doors down Dick's place—she goes there when we aren't around—and brought her here. She's lying at the foot of the bed, sleeping happily. I really hope Rague will be fine with her here. And Sully. I can't ask Rague to give him a roof too, can I? I shove aside the questions for now. There's no reason to stir up more trouble. I'll find a solution.

Rague lets out a soft moan, and my fingers push his curls away from his forehead. "Shhhh. Rest," I softly murmur. "Everything is fine. You can rest."

But is it true? What happens now?

My fingers move to his temple and further down where those hidden scars are. When I was washing away the blood in his hair I noticed them, needle-thin and small, peppering the whole area behind his ear. They looked old, and in some areas, thick, like the wound hadn't had time to heal before the skin was sliced open again. What could have caused them? More importantly why?

I continue watching him for a few more minutes, until Michael's head peeks from behind the door.

"They are back. Is he okay?"

I nod. I kiss Rague's knuckles before gently placing his swollen hand under the duvet again and move toward the door. One last look at his peaceful



figure, and then I drag myself out and leave the door ajar—just in case he calls. I turn toward the voices and head to the kitchen.

Someone started a fire in the living room fireplace. The smell of burning wood and the warmth filling the room is nice.

Michael is standing between Raph's legs near the kitchen island where Rami, in tight jeans and a tighter shirt, is drinking a soda. He's almost as brawny as Rague. Meg and Linda are sitting on one side of the dining table—two large empty plates with chocolate crumbs and melted ice cream left over are laying on the wooden surface. On the other side are Sully and Lori, who's glaring at Gabe for some reason. He's leaning against the fridge, reading something on his phone. His blue tailored suits and cold grey eyes tell a tale of broken hearts and lack of fucking remorse.

Rami said that Uri and Sari are not coming, I don't remember the reason why. Fuck, there are so many of them. Lori will never remember their names.

All the chitchat stops when they see me.

Meg is the one who walks to me and takes my hand. "Here you are. How are you, kiddo?" She's been very sweet and motherly from the moment I met her—around six hours ago.

I give her a closed-mouth smile. I feel drained physically and mentally, but I need to know what's wrong with Rague. She pulls me to the table, and I sit between Sully and Lori. I grab my brother's head and bump his forehead with mine before letting him go. The familiar gesture grounds me. He looks okay, a bit freaked out by all these new people and by what happened. But all in all, okay.

"Before explaining to you about the red haze attacks, can you tell us what happened?" Linda asks me.

I'm about to open my mouth when Sully suddenly stands up, dropping his chair on the floor. "It's all my fault."

"Sully! That's codswallop," Lori squeezes his arm.

"It's what?" Michael asks, confused.

My brother continues, "No, it isn't. If I didn't come back early from my trip and let Ollie know, he wouldn't have come to Dick's house, and Rague wouldn't have...hulked out." He glances at Rami for confirmation, and the big bearded guy nods at him.

"And Dick would have used you as his punchball," I retort.

"He hit me once before *you* arrived and did what you always do." He stops to wipe away the tears from his red eyes, pushing his glasses up and looking so damn young and miserable. And fuck, I feel the tears forming at the back of my eyes as well. "Provoke him, so that he focuses on you and leaves me alone. Because I'm so fucking weak."

"You are not weak. You're so smart and good, Sully-doo. So good. You have a real chance at doing great things," I assert vehemently.

"And you don't?" Sully counters.

"No." Maybe. Maybe it's too late.

"That's rubbish, you git," he snaps at me. My brother spends too much time with Lori.

"Well said," my best friend promptly agrees with him. Gabe sniffs at that, and Lori sends him a blazing glower. What did I miss? What's all this animosity between them?

"If you're thinking about all the shitty things Dick forced you to do, you did them for me. To protect *me*." Sully doesn't let it go.

And fuck, I don't want to have this conversation in front of all these strangers. Even though they've been helping us, I can see the caution,

especially in Raph and Gabe's gazes.

Sully moves his regretful eyes to Meg and Linda. "It's not his fault. This mess is all on me. Please believe me. He's the best brother I could hope for, and he really cares for Rague."

"I can attest to that, Mom One and Mom Two. I've never seen Ollie so smitten. I mean, he forced me to stalk him!" I roll my eyes at my friend's idiocy. Way to turn me into a nutcase in front of Rague's family.

A couple of brows kick up, and my brother looks at me with a, "Really? You loser!" kind of expression. To which I answer sarcastically with a, "Like my moronic behavior still surprises you," look.

"Is it true?" Raph is studying me with those dark, no-bullshit eyes.

"That I stalked him? Yes. And Rague made us easily since Lori is a danger to society when he drives," I reply with my most unashamed tone. I won't shrink and tremble under anyone's stare.

"Fuck off, you lily-liver. My driving is..."—*Suicidal? Losing-your-lunch terrible? Making-a-deal-with-the-devil scary?*—"...sporty."

Sully produces a very loud snort at Lori's ridiculous word choice.

"Of course, Rague made you." Linda sounds smug. "I taught him." That's a weird statement. Especially since she looks like a dainty angel. But one look from her, and my mischief wants to come out and play.

"Do you care about him even after seeing what he's capable of?" Raph tries again.

"Yes." My voice comes out steady and strong, "And that's all I'm going to say to you. Because the rest is between Rague and me."

"You were right, the kiddo has big balls," Linda stage whispers, looking at Rami. Kitty, kiddo...I inspire really shitty nicknames.

“Stop questioning him, bully boy! And start answering why you all were so unaffected by the gory *Game of Thrones* scene we stepped into at Micro Dick’s house!”

Lori is staring daggers at Raph, but he just glances back with a bored expression, like he’s gotten his answers and is done talking.

“Raph, rein the *psycho* in,” Michael sighs. Psycho is kind of fitting for his fiancé.

“Bro, we never see your ass-kissing alter ego, let him out for a change,” Rami adds before taking a sip from his can of Coke.

And still, nobody is giving us answers.

“Sully, sit down, please. And Ollie, we can all see how much Rague means to you. You haven’t left his side for hours.” Meg smiles at me, making me blush. “We are just trying to understand what triggered his attack, not find a culprit,” she tries to assure the three of us.

But then Gabe says in his cold, inscrutable way, “Unless there’s a culprit here, in which case he’s a dead man walking.” His piercing eyes bore into mine. A very witty, snarky comment is on the tip of my tongue, but it doesn’t leave my lips.

“Take one step near him, and you’ll regret it.” Rague’s growly voice makes me jump, and I spin around. He’s standing in the doorway. “Near any of them,” he adds, glancing at Lori and Sully.

I hear the chair hitting the floor as I sprint toward him and close my arms around his huge torso. My face rubs on his warm, strong, broad chest, and I inhale deeply. He smells like his musky self again, and I feel so damn happy that something close to a low purr escapes my lips.

“Hey, kitty.” His hoarse, deep voice makes his chest vibrate against my cheek, and I’m so relieved to hear it again that I don’t mind the nickname—

just this once. I love him, but I'm never going to change for anyone.

His bandage-wrapped hand rests awkwardly on my head while I feel his other sliding inside my sweats to possessively grab my butt.

"Are you okay?" he whispers, and there's such gravity in his voice, I feel the need to soothe it any way I can.

"Now, I am." I sigh happily, reining those stupid tears in while leaning back to give him a trembling smile. His curls are falling around his face in a wild mess, and his broody expression is back, although there's a sweetness to it that wasn't there before.

He captures my lips in a breathtaking, claiming, movie-scene-worthy kiss. I can feel the lust and dare I say *love* in every sweep of his tongue. Never the passive one, unless it's Rague's cock I'm dealing with, I return the kiss with fervor, not caring about the sting from my split lip or our audience. He pulls back, and I notice how he's heavily leaning against the doorframe. I'm mauling him instead of taking care of him. I'm such an idiot.

"Great. Now there's another NC-17 couple in the family." Rami's sarcasm makes me smirk.

"What are you whining about? It's hot. Papa Lori's job is done." My best friend waggles his eyebrows at me.

"Lori! That's mega disturbing on so many levels." Sully sounds disgusted, but then smiles at us. He seems to approve, and I feel the last of my anxiety leaving me.

Instead of sitting at the table again, I push Rague toward the sofa. It's more comfortable for him. I fuss a bit around him, bringing a blanket, a bottle of water, and three energy bars—since that's what he asked for.

The others have all moved to the living room as well. I sit next to Rague and draw my legs up, resting my knees on his lap under the blanket. His

body bends toward me reflexively, and he pulls my knees and cuddles me closer, as he talks to Meg about how he feels. His mind is on the conversation, but his body wants me closer. Wants to touch me. A warm, fuzzy sensation starts to spread inside my chest.

Can a heart explode with happiness? Mine seems to be willing to try.

Silence falls on the room until Linda declares, "It's time," looking at Rague with an encouraging stare.

Gabe huffs, not looking very pleased, but he doesn't add anything else. He moves near the window and looks out into the darkness.

Rague's hand bumps mine, then folds around my fingers—his knuckles are red and swollen. My thumb brushes the raised scar on his wrist, and the number six burned on his skin once again makes me frown.

"It was my project number," Rague says, staring at his wrist. "When I was a kid, I was kidnapped by two scientists who experimented on me. I was Subject Six."

"W-what?" I hear myself asking. My brain halts, while my heart starts pounding inside my chest where a sense of dread is unfurling quickly.

"What do you mean experimented?" Lori asks from his seat on the thick rug near Sully.

"Mostly torture." My mind goes to the scars on his back and behind his ear.

"The goal was to create emotionless assassins that would follow orders without defiance. And they used a different method with each of us."

Tears pool in my eyes. Then all his words register. *Each of them?*

"How many of you were there?" Sully's voice is soft and hesitant.

"Seven." Rague moves his eyes to the men surrounding us.

"All of you?" My eyes dart among them, and one by one they all show me their numbers. With Uri and Sari, they are seven in total. Michael is the

only one who has it tattooed, but he explains he escaped before the scientists decided to brand them and got it later on.

“It’s a long story,” he finishes.

Rague is looking unseeingly at the fire and the red flames burning high from the darkening logs. “They chose us because we all showed psychotic traits, which disappeared in most of us as we grew older.”

“I didn’t know that was possible,” Lori says.

“I’m a forensic psychiatrist and can assure you that it is,” Meg says from her seat on the big ottoman.

Raph huffs at that. And now I understand the “psycho” term Michael used with him.

“So, there’re a few psychopaths among you, that explains a lot. But why did you Hulk out?” Never known for being subtle, Lori brazenly asks.

“It was a red haze attack. That’s what we call it, except Rami,” Rague clarifies.

“Noted.” My friend nods.

“There’s a region of the brain in the medial temporal lobe called the amygdala. It’s the part that processes fear, triggers anger, and motivates us to act,” Rague says.

“It helps coordinate responses to things in your environment, especially those that trigger an emotional response,” Sully adds.

“Yes,” Meg smiles at him. “Are you interested in following a medical path?”

“Veterinary. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to interrupt.” He blushes with embarrassment at Rague.

I felt the instinctual urge to defend my brother, but Rague shakes his head.

“You didn’t. Feel free to correct me if I say something wrong.”

And with just a few words, he's soothed Sully and made me fall impossibly more in love with him.

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## Chapter 13

*RAGUEL*

I look at Meg, trying to silently communicate that I need a little bit of help to make them understand. To make Ollie understand.

“When a person feels stressed or afraid, the amygdala releases hormones that prepare the body to fight the threat or flee from the danger, the fight-or-flight response. Common emotions that trigger this response include fear, anger, anxiety, and aggression. Anger is a natural and mostly automatic response to pain, physical or emotional. The type of pain does not matter; the important thing is that the pain experienced is unpleasant.”

My stomach lurches as some of those agony-filled memories threaten to surface. Ollie’s fingers squeezing mine are my anchor, and I focus on them. I feel his eyes on the side of my head where the scars are. Did he see them? Can he guess what they are?

“For mild or moderate threats, the frontal lobes, which is a more rational part of our brain, can often override the amygdala, so we can approach the

situation rationally. But in the case of strong threats, the amygdala may trigger a hijack. Now, like many functions in our brain, the amygdala isn't something we can control directly. Those scientists thought they could manipulate it." She stops and tilts her head at me.

Probably feeling the strenuous effort I'm making to find the right words, Ollie suddenly pushes onto my lap, wrapping his arms around my neck and massaging the back of my head. I don't recoil at the touch this time. It's like something clicked in my brain. He took care of me when I was at my lowest. He stayed. My body and brain accept him as if he is a part of me now.

I hug him back and relax under his soft touch.

The silence in the room is heavy, and when I look up I see shock, happiness, and acceptance in the many looks aimed at us. If my words and actions didn't show what Ollie means to me before, this will definitely do it. Because I don't let anybody touch my face. Not even them. And my family knows why.

"How?" Sully asks.

"They overstimulated my amygdala. They operated on my brain. And the more times they did, the more I turned into a mindless monster. I experienced unpredictable aggressiveness and destructive and self-destructive behavior. I was lost in my rage. No morals, no rational thoughts, no shame. All I felt was excruciating pain, and all I wanted was for it to stop. When I'm under the red haze, I destroy and kill everything and everyone that crosses my path. When my body tires, the seizures start. The only thing that stops them is an injection of sedative."

Ollie's arms tighten around me, just shy of painful, and I feel his lips brushing against my cheek.

“But you didn’t kill us. You looked like you wanted to, snarling and growling menacingly. But you let Ollie come close to you before the shaking started,” Lori tells me.

“I did?” I ask, confused. “I don’t have memories of what happens when I’m under. Are you crazy?” I cup Ollie’s face to look him in the eye, “I could have hurt you, killed you.”

“Well, I’m here, and you didn’t even touch me,” he counters defensively.

“But you let me touch you. It was fine!” He comes nose to nose with me.

“I didn’t know who you were, Ollie.” My fingers slide in among the hair on his nape, and I grab a handful, hard. His head tilts back slightly, showing me his neck. But his burning eyes stay on me.

“Well, I didn’t know that. And then it was too late. Stop growling.”

I push his face into the crook of my neck. “You’ll be punished as soon as I get better,” I whisper low into his ear, so that he’s the only one to hear it.

“Bring it on.” I can hear the challenge in his voice, and fuck, my cock twitches at that.

“Fascinating,” Meg whispers.

“I guess we don’t have to take him down if we have Ollie with us.” Rami raises his hands in the air in a “what did I say” pose when Meg shakes her head at him.

“What usually triggers your attacks?” Ollie asks, his tone is soft again. I can hear it in his voice that he wants to understand.

“They are rare. Before today, I hadn’t had one in four years. The red haze overwhelms me when I let my emotions run free, when I’m not able to keep a tight control on my anger, fear, and anxiousness. My brain makes me relive the pain from those years, and I get lost in it.” Ollie keeps caressing my cheek, and I close my eyes and lean into his comforting touch. “Usually,

I'm good at calming myself down. With Meg's assistance, we found a few things that help."

"Music," Ollie utters.

I nod. "Breathing techniques, sex, exercising."

"So, that's why you're huge," Lori states.

I shrug. "These last few months have been frustrating. And when I found your father and his friends beating on you, I just...snapped."

"I'm sorry." Ollie pushes a hand over his mouth.

"Don't be. Didn't you hear a word Meg said, kitty? It's those scientists' fault."

"How can you do that to a kid? I hope you liquidated them!" Lori suddenly and angrily spits out, earning amused looks from all around.

"That's actually what they do," Linda says. "Whatever Dick forced you to do is small compared to my boys' side business."

"Which is?" Ollie turns to me.

"We find people like Dick or Lenny, that police can't or won't arrest and we...liquidate them," I tell him. My arm automatically pulls him closer to me, like my body is expecting him to run, fingers tightening in his hair.

"Liquidate, as in kill them?" he slowly asks.

"We have our fun first. But yeah, that's the goal," Raph blatantly offers.

Ollie blinks a couple of times. Then he turns his face to Sully and Lori, expression blank. Sully's different-colored eyes look huge on his face and his mouth is wide open, while Lori's perfect eyebrows have disappeared behind his curls.

"Why?" Ollie looks at me again, his eyes flickering between mine. Studying. Peering inside my soul.

“I can only speak for myself, but punishing evil is my revenge. I was too weak when they kidnapped me. I couldn’t defend myself. Couldn’t punish them. Now I do, on behalf of others. Their torture filled me with rage. I unleash that rage on people just as vile as them,” I try to explain, something I’ve never done before. Never felt the need to. Not even to myself.

“We only torture and kill very bad people. No kids or animals,” Rami turns to Sully when he says animals. His words are met with silence.

“Sometimes, bad guys make the best good guys?” He tries again, glancing at Michael, since that’s his way of describing us.

“Look...” Gabe moves away from the window and takes a couple of steps toward us. “Those scientists fucked us up. We can function as *decent-ish* human beings and still be part of this society.”

“But for whatever reason you, need to let it out on bad people to do that.” Gabe and Lori share a long stare before it’s broken by Rami’s, “Very bad people.”

“Isn’t it dangerous? Aren’t you afraid to get caught?” Ollie doesn’t look disgusted or scared, just shocked. I also catch the well-hidden, but not completely buried worry in his eyes.

“We’ve been doing this for years. We follow a code and have a system,” Raph sounds as bored as usual.

“Okay. If it’s evil people and-and the police can’t catch them, and you get enough proof of what they did before liquidating them, I understand,” Sully says surprisingly. “I mean, Ollie and I have witnessed horrible things done to innocent people. We were lucky in a way. Dick made us steal, sell drugs, fight, and more, but... Wait, are we bad people to you?”

“Fuck, no!” Rami is the first to reply. “You are survivors, just like us.” But Sully doesn’t seem convinced.

“Did you enjoy doing those things?” Gabe asks him.

“Never.”

“That’s your answer.” Gabe’s no-nonsense ways seem to get through to Sully. Who would have thought?

“I’m okay with it too. I actually would like to see how you do it.” Lori looks serious about it.

“Lori, I really don’t think it’s going to be like one of your gory movies,” Ollie tells him.

“Believe me, it is not,” Michael agrees. “But if you really want to, you can come to the base tomorrow. When Raph will take care of his donor.”

“Base? Donor?” Sully asks.

“It’s too late to explain tonight. Rague needs to rest. You all do. And also, you need time to think. I hope we can trust your discretion?” Linda asks.

“We won’t say a word,” Ollie declares, brushing the burn on my wrist. It feels like a promise to me.

“Your secret is safe with me. We’ve been talking about killing Micro Dick for years. But the way you did it? It will live rent-free inside my brain forever,” Lori tells me, sighing long and dramatically, looking like an actress from those old silent movies. The little guy will fit just fine in our family.

“God, Lori!” Sully gives him a shove.

But that reminds me, I need to see the pictures of the aftermath at Dick’s house. Looking at the destruction I caused reminds me why I need to be better at controlling it.

Linda stands up with a satisfied smile. “We have lunch every Sunday at our house. Lori, Sully, Ollie, you are all invited.”

Meg hugs Ollie and Sully, and thanks Lori for his help. Then everybody files to the door, except Sully and Lori who remain in the kitchen. Ollie helps me off the sofa and doesn't let go of my hand.

"Oh, I almost forgot. I added all our bros' numbers inside your new phones," Rami tells them.

"New phones?" Sully repeats.

"They're in one of the bags by the entrance. Don't ask how I did it. Just call me the Tech Wizard."

"How about Red Beard?" Lori proposes, staring at the bush covering half of his face.

"From *GTO*? I'll take it!" The door closes behind him, and Ollie turns to me, looking suddenly nervous.

"Can Sully and Lori stay here tonight? Oh, and our cat, Pink, as well. I know it's last minute, and I'm dropping this in your lap after all that's happened. But I promise I'll do my best to find a pl..."

My fingers quickly wrap around his neck. The loose grip cuts off Ollie's rambling and turns the heat on in his eyes. His body recognizes who it belongs to. I wish I could fuck him, but I'm too weak for that. And we need to talk more. But first things first.

"You are staying with me. Both of you," I rasp, glancing at Sully before returning my gaze to Ollie. "Lori is welcome as well, if he doesn't mind sharing with Sully for a while. I'll build an extra room for you."

"I have my own apartment, but I'd like to stay a few nights since I got fired."

"What?" Sounds like Ollie didn't know that.

Lori keeps going, "I'd also like to come to visit from time to time. So, fuck yes to my own room, please."



I thought my kitty was snarky, but Lori's sassiness exceeds his by a lot. I nod at him, but my focus is on a still-fidgeting Ollie.

His throat goes a little splotchy under my fingers and the blush spreads to his cheeks. He bites his lower lip nervously. "I'd like to stay here with you, but I understand if... I have my little brother, and I talk a lot, and I'm moody, and...I don't want to disrupt your life even more," he confesses in a short breath.

"Isn't that the fucking truth? From the second you set your beautiful, mischievous misty-green eyes on me you crept into my life and turned it upside down." He looks down, and that's fucking unacceptable. "Look at me, kitty. For any other person that should be alarming, but fuck that. I'd run headfirst into mayhem and chaos if that meant being with you...but I guess you did that for me instead."

He beams up at me, and I kiss him to taste that happiness on his lips.

"I need you close. I want to keep you safe—that includes Sully and Lori. They're your family, so now they're mine as well. Just accept it."

"And caving that easily? You know me better than that." He smirks at me, and his hands slip beneath my shirt to stroke my scarred back.

"You know I can make you say it," I suggestively remind him. "But just this once, give in." I try to ignore the intense squirming sensation inside my belly. My fingers twitch around his throat. If his answer is no, I still have the tying-him-to-my-bed option to carry out.

But he yells a yes and proceeds to kiss my face all over.

"Balls, I need to take a very private shower," Lori breaks the moment.

Ollie rolls his eyes. "God, Lori, we need to install a filter inside your mouth."

He pushes on my chest, and I let him go to hug his brother. Lori comes my way. He barely reaches my pec, but the smile on his lips is kind of creepy. He crooks his index finger at me. Holding myself on the back of the chair, I bend my torso a few inches forward. My leg feels stiff and my body aches all over.

“Red haze or not, I will gut you open like a bloody fish and let you eat your own intestines as your last meal if you hurt him.” His saccharine voice is a huge contrast to the vicious words. But this best friend posturing makes me respect him even more because he has Ollie’s back. Even against a guy three times his size.

“Got it KKJ?”

I straighten up again. And raise a brow at him. “KKJ?”

“King Kong Jr. I’m very bad with names. So, I give people nicknames.” He shrugs.

Ollie is shaking his head at Lori. “Happy?”

“Ecstatic.” His friend smiles. “I needed to clear things up because I care about you.”

“Care less,” Ollie quips.

“Where’s the guest room?” Sully asks.

“You mean *your* room. It’s the second door to the right. Our bedroom,” I place a possessive hand on Ollie’s shoulder, watching how his brother’s eyes widen, “is the third on the other side of the corridor.”

After Ollie shows them where everything is in the bathroom and gives them what they need, he finally comes to bed. He lies next to me, and as soon as I lift my arm, he curls around my side—gently, so as not to hurt me, his head on my pec, leg slung over my thigh. The painkiller I took is slowly working.

“I’ve seen the cat, by the way,” I tell him, kissing his head and inhaling his honey scent.

“Pink?”

“I woke up and thought my house was haunted. Fuck, he’s ugly.”

He giggles. “Pink is a she. She’s a survivor. Don’t call her ugly in front of Sully. He loves her dearly.”

I sigh. I have a cat, a boyfriend, and his brother living with me. Who would have thought?

“Did my family mess with you? They are a bit protective.”

He pushes himself up on an elbow and looks at me.

“No, they didn’t.” His lips quirk with humor. “And if you keep piss-marking your territory so thoroughly, nobody will dare to even say hello to me.”

“Good.” That earns me a little huff.

“Are you really okay?” I ask, each word takes monumental effort. “With... this?” I wave my hand at myself. He knows what I mean. “Aren’t you scared?”

He cups my cheek with his long fingers. His eyes are full of adoration. Fuck, nobody has ever looked at me this way. “Only of losing you. You can never leave me, not ever.” His thumb rubs my jaw, and he averts his eyes before focusing them back up on mine. “I need you, Rague, with me because...because I love you.”

Ollie needs me. He loves me. The thought makes me feel dazed. It’s intoxicating, invigorating, ratcheting up my obsession and protectiveness in away that is not healthy.

“I want you with me all the time. Want to take care of you, protect you, open my chest and tuck you inside, take you out only to fuck you till I fill

you up, mark you as mine and hold you in my arms. You deserve better, but I don't fucking care. Is that love?"

He doesn't flee hearing my word vomit—which would have proved difficult as he's anchored to my side by my arm. He snorts instead. "I think it is."

We kiss long and slow. When his fingers brush tentatively against the scars on the side of my head, I cover his hand and push it more firmly against them. I feel myself trembling, and I squeeze my eyes tightly.

"When those scientists experimented on me, they kept me immobile on a bed for days, sometimes months at a time. My head was held down by a metallic band. I couldn't move, even when the pain was unbearable. Didn't matter how much I begged or cried. They ignored me. Controlled me, their hands held me down while they tortured me. That's why I don't like to be touched, especially my head. It reminds me of the pain, the helplessness. A small pat, a light hug from my family is fine but..."

"I can stop if you want. You can still touch me as much as you want. You can tie my wrists up while we fuck, so I don't get tempted."

I kiss his lips and growl happily. How did I get so lucky? I guess Ollie is God's apology gift to me.

"Fuck no. I love your touch. My cock fucking adores your hands. But the tying you up part...I got a half-chub just thinking about it."

"Only half?" He sounds offended. Such a brat.

"Kitty, I shouldn't even be able to feel my cock after all the sedative they pumped into my veins."

That reminds me of another topic we need to settle. "My family's side business..."

“That’s kind of hard to process. Lori and I talked about getting rid of Dick so many times. The only thing stopping us was the fear of getting caught and leaving Sully alone. What I mean to say is that I’m not innocent, Rague. Quite the opposite. I’m not that good of a guy either.” He repeats the same words I told him yesterday. “I wished Dick dead every fucking day, him and his friends. And I would have done it sooner or later. I know I would.” He puffs out a heavy sigh. “So, when I imagine more *Dicks* roaming the earth, hurting people, I get sick to my stomach. And I want you guys to make them pay because nobody else will.”

“I hear a but,” I say, while he lays his head back down on my pec and starts stroking my chest.

“Ever heard the story of the two wolves living inside us?”

“No.”

“It was Sully’s favorite one growing up. One wolf is good and one is bad. Both want to eat. You can feed the good wolf more, but the bad one needs food as well from time to time. I’m just afraid you and your brothers could feed the bad wolf more.”

I hum. “I have you now. You’re my anchor.”

“Your anchor?” He sounds confused. Right, he doesn’t know Linda’s code. And Michael added the anchor bit only recently.

“You’ll be in charge of feeding my good fangy fucker.”

“I’m not sure I’m up for the job,” he murmurs hesitantly.

“You witnessed evil and were forced to do its bidding. And you are remorseful even though you did it out of love and survival. You’re the only person I’d trust for the job.”

I feel his smirk against my chest. “I’ll keep your good wolf stuffed and satisfied. But I like to see the bad beastie when we fuck. I like you all

ruthless and bossy.”

I let out a promising grunt. I’ll show him how bossy I can be...later. I’m sleepy.

The last thing I hear is Ollie’s sweet, off-key singing.



I can’t remember a time when I liked to sleep alone. It’s impossible to do so when I go to sleep with Ollie curled around me, and I’m filled with his warmth, his sweet scent, his soft goodnight whisper on my cheek. My chest feels like it might burst. It’s only natural to want to protect him even when we dream.

Some mornings, it’s like waking up with a spider monkey on my back, but then his hand starts jerking me off before his mouth takes its place, getting a ruthless face fuck, and I’m ready to be the small spoon any damn time he wants.

It’s been two weeks since my red haze attack, and I’m almost completely healed. This morning I wake up with my head on Ollie’s lower torso. I listen to his slow breaths and the strange, loud gurgling inside his belly. I feel the tickle of his pubic hair against my pec, his long fingers on my shoulder, his warm leg tangled with my arm, the soft brush of his long hair

in my fist. The position is far from comfortable and must be the reason why I woke up before the alarm.

My hard dick is actually happy we have extra time. Taking his advice, I let go of Ollie's hair, pushing his leg to the mattress and sliding down till my face is lined up with his growing cock. I had our room soundproofed three days ago, after Ollie found out Sully asked me to buy him a noise-canceling headset. And since then, I've been pounding his perfect ass three times a day.

He must feel tired, but he never complains about my high sex drive because he's the one provoking my chubs most of the time. He said fucking helps me to vent and keeps me calm, so we need to do it as much as possible...the horny slut. But if it was up to me, I'd live inside him, and my confession only made him hornier.

I give his balls long licks, up and down the way he likes it. And when he's all hard and ready, I suck on his head and lap at the precum forming on the tip. He moans, and I take it deep till it hits my throat. His hand grabs my hair, but it's just a way to anchor himself to me. He doesn't guide me because he loves my fast, merciless rhythm.

"Rague!" he croaks my name and arches his back as he silently begs for exactly what I want to give him. I slide him out of my mouth, enjoying his desperate whimper. Because it's me he's desperate for.

I move my fingers down his balls, slicking them on the way to his puckered hole. He pulls his bent legs toward his chest, giving me the best view. I almost lose myself from the expression on his face as I inch closer to his crack, his hole clenching desperately. I rub my thumb against his sensitive hole, but then I change my mind, and moving my fingers on his ass cheeks, I spread him open for a taste.

I lick down his taint and over his hole, making him buck his hips in surprise. I have to press my forearm over the back of his thighs to keep him still, and he promptly sinks his nails into it.

Fuck, he tastes good, like Ollie but darker, more intimate combined with the taste of the cum I pumped into him last night. He quivers against my tongue as I push inside him, sending a zap of desire straight down to my leaking cock. I start humping the bed, leaving precum all over the sheets while he rocks against my face, hands fisting the duvet, half gasping, half moaning, and not being quiet about it.

I want to ask him if he likes to be fucked by my tongue, but the needy, slutty sounds that fall from his mouth say it all. My nose bumps against his balls every time I move forward, and on the next push, I nuzzle them, holding my tongue as deep as it can go—which is not much, he’s too damn tight. *Fuuck*, his taste in my mouth and the smell of his cock, combined with the friction as I thrust against the mattress, is too fucking much.

“Rague, I want those thick, rough fingers inside me, hard and fast.” He grabs the lube from the nightstand and tosses it near me.

I growl, hoping he can feel the vibration inside him, and then pull out my tongue to shove two lubed fingers in.

“Yesss!”

I suck on his dick while I finger-bang him. Three minutes, and he’s riding four digits like a damn pro. I take them out, shift him on his side, and positioning myself behind him, I impale him on my eager cock.

Fucking perfection.

I wrap my hand around his throat and push his chin up with my thumb while I whisper into his ear, “My turn.”



I feel him melting back into the mattress and a surge of satisfaction fills me at the easy way he trusts me. My cock throbs inside his velvety walls. My thick, hairy thighs rub against the back of his smooth ones as I start to rail him. I hook my arm under his top leg and lift it, pressing deeper. Ollie's cock is leaking steadily onto his abs, and I watch as it bounces with every slam of my hips. He keeps repeating my name like a mantra.

"That's what I'm talking about. Keep saying who you belong to."

"You and your monster cock." He smirks, looking over his shoulder at me.

My body blankets his, my lips and tongue are on his neck, sucking and licking his delicious skin as I fuck him mercilessly. I lower my head, and he moans into my mouth as our tongues tangle. The kiss is sloppy and uncoordinated. I keep his mouth open with my thumb and let my saliva drip on his tongue. He smiles sultrily at me and swallows it, licking his lips. *Hot as fuck*. He just takes whatever I give him.

He's stroking his dick with one hand while the other grabs onto my ass cheek, kneading it with his fingers, pushing me to go faster, his nails digging into the meaty muscle. I love when he uses his claws on me.

"Oh, fuck. I'm going to come on your cock. I'm going to come on your big, fat, long cock." And he does. He shoots all over my pillow and his chest, crying out in ecstasy. His hole contracts around me as if it's trying to squeeze the jizz out. And damn, I want to give it to him so badly.

"Wait!" I freeze at his request.

And in the next second, I find myself on my back. Ollie is straddling me with a naughty smile. My hands take hold of his narrow hips when he grabs my aching dick, shifts it near his hole, and drops onto it in one breathtaking, smooth move. I groan, arching toward the ceiling and impaling him even

more on my dripping cock. It feels like in this position, I can stuff him with more inches.

He grinds on me, rolling his hips while making the small, sexy noises he makes when he's savoring my full length. His head is all the way back, mouth open when he starts riding me. Hard.

His thighs work him up and down, ass slapping, hands pushing on my chest, and I have the most amazing view of Ollie fucking himself on my dick.

"Your cock. Rague, there's so much of it in me." His words are slurred, like he's actually drunk on it.

It's the first time he takes control. And damn, he's the most gorgeous, orgasmic sight. He props his hands on my thighs, leaning his long, defined torso back, half-hard cock swinging while he keeps bouncing on my shaft—taking only the tip of my dick in a fast rhythm, then my whole length again. He's turning me into a crazy lust-chasing fucker.

My hands slide to his ass, digging into the soft flesh to spur him to move faster, while I start pumping right into him from below.

Seeing his hole completely stretched around me, feeling my thick dick being sucked inside his tight clenching walls again and again, hearing the obscene, wet sound of our fucking, it makes me nearly lose my mind.

"Fuck, you can take it deep, kitty," I grunt.

"Nooo!" he suddenly stops and sits up.

"What?" I'm confused and alert, and so damn hard. I need to fucking come.

"You can't call me that while Pink is here." He glares at me and then at something on his left.

"Your pervy cat?" I'm not surprised, she's always around when we are fucking.

“This is so embarrassing,” he sighs, “Oh, God. Now she’s watching!”

“You said her name,” I remind him. I slap his ass and then knead both cheeks, wanting to resume my sexy show. “Go back to riding my cock.”

“She’s watching,” he hisses.

“I don’t fucking care.” With a snarl, I roll him beneath me, shove back into his ass, sinking hard inside him. I’m forcing my heavier weight on him. Caging him under me. Slowly taking away his air supply. Reminding him who is in command here.

“Mine!” I growl raggedly.

I slide my length slowly out, grunting when his hole desperately tries to keep me inside.

“Don’t like kitty?” I slam all the way back in, making him gasp. His little claws are back in my skin.

Then I glide out again. “How about fuck toy?” Another feral thrust. “You love it when I use you like a cock sleeve.” I push deeper, groaning at the way he contracts around me. “You turn into a cat in heat when I tell you to stay put and take it.”

My hips start to jackhammer, and he moans every time I hit his inner thighs, opening his legs wider. I lift my torso a bit to let him breathe easily, but he pulls me back down on top of him, his hard cock dripping precum between us.

“Fuck yes, slash those scars on my back and make them yours...kitty.” His nails dig inside my skin viciously, and I bite down on his shoulder to stop myself from crying out.

I grab one of his hands and place it on the side of my head directly on the scars, closing my eyes and breathing deeply when I feel his fingers on the

raised skin. My rhythm falters and then I almost stop. He turns my head and lifting his lips, he places them right on the scars.

It doesn't make them disappear, and I don't want them to. Without them, there would be no Ollie. Because everything that happened to me, that caused those scars, led me to him. To my bratty, vulnerable, caring, naughty, mischievous kitty.

"What would you do if someone touches me?" Ollie suddenly whispers in my ear.

My eyes slide open and snap to his.

"If someone tries to take me from you?" He laces his fingers through my hair and pulls.

A gush of pure possessiveness rushes through me, and I pour it all on him.

"I'll kill them. Nobody touches what's mine!"

I sit up, grab his thighs in a bruising grip, keeping them painfully open, and like a man obsessed and possessed I pound into his ass mercilessly.

"Mine! Mine!" I snarl. I'm racing toward the edge. All I want is to find my pleasure and fill him up.

"Yes, yours! Forever yours! I want you so badly, every fucking second of the day. I love you. I love you." The confession comes out choked, but the words push me over the cliff.

"Get ready for another big load." My voice is unrecognizable, demon-deep.

"Mark my hole as yours," he pants.

My hips are thrown off rhythm, and then my orgasm slams into me. I'm stuffing him so good as I roar the mind-blowing bliss from deep within my chest. My hips buck once, twice, then a few more times. I feel Ollie trembling under me, sexily moaning as he succumbs to another orgasm.

Always two when I fuck him. His breathing is fast and shallow, his chest rising and falling, spent cock in his hand.

“Feel the throb of my cock inside you. I’m getting your ass nice and full, Ollie.” Fuck, I’m such a possessive fucker. And he loves it, by the way he’s smiling at me with intense gratification.

Nobody else will ever see him like this, all red skin, messy brown strands on the white sheet, dreamy eyes and swollen lips. He lets out a breathless, sated sound, and I try to move, but his legs wrap around me like a vise.

“Don’t pull out yet.” But as he begs, the alarm goes off, and music invades the room. He whines while I smirk with amusement. I give him two slow pumps of my cock, enjoying the sight of his mouth falling open on a moan when I hit his prostate. And then two more because, fuck, his cum-slick ass is pure, irresistible temptation.

I breathe deeply, taking a drag of his scent mixed with sex. I untangle his legs and pull out. Don’t need to say anything to him but, “Good boy,” when his fingers automatically replace my cock to keep my cum inside him.

I walk to the bathroom and dampen a washcloth, so I can wipe the cum off his stomach while he steals little pecks from my lips until I’m smiling big.

When I’m done, he stretches his long frame, popping all the joints loudly. “Fuck, I’m going to feel you all morning.”

“Don’t expect an apology,” I grunt, slapping that peachy ass. The thought of him feeling me with every step he takes satisfies me immensely.

“No. I expect to get my ass filled again after lunch.”

I respond to his sass with a heated gaze, and his lips part. *That’s right, remember who owns you.*

We don’t shower, preferring to keep our scents on each other during the day—I damn *insist* on it.

My heart flutters as he starts moving around the room—our room—putting his clothes on, no briefs, while talking about today's plans. He got quite upset when he found out that the many bags filling the entrance were full of things for him: clothes and shoes, toiletries, accessories, and whatever else I could think of. Even more so when I did the same for Sully. But spoiling them, giving them what they need and want and never had before makes me feel good. So, it's a selfish act really. He didn't buy that explanation whatsoever, but I see him smiling every time he uses the bathrobe with his name or the pink and purple hoodie or the leather gloves and the soft knit cap. He still wants to keep working for me to earn money, he said to buy me gifts as well.

When I'm ready, I leave Ollie to his face creams and move to the kitchen, where Sully, ready for school, is pouring some dry food into Pink's white bowl—and a lot on the floor. At the sound, the ugly cat prowls down the corridor, but before going to eat, she strokes her body between Sully's legs. "She was in your bedroom again," he huffs while grabbing the orange juice from the fridge. He's about to drink directly from the carton when I groan and hand him a glass.

"Sorry. I need to remember I can use glasses." He blushes with embarrassment.

If I could kill Dick all over again, I fucking would. I move to the coffee machine and try to focus solely on what I'm doing. It's a relaxing technique Meg taught me, just to be in the moment.

"Would you teach me how to play the guitar?" Sully suddenly asks from his seat at the table.

Every evening, after having dinner or watching a movie, we sit in the living room around the fire, and I play a few songs while Ollie and Sully listen or

sing along. They both love it. Sully falls asleep on the sofa most times, and I have to carry him to bed.

“Sure, we need to start with the driving lesson as well.”

“Driving lessons?” He lifts his eyes from his cereal bowl.

“You’re seventeen, you can drive yourself to school,” I state.

“Really?” he asks like he never thought about it. “But then I’ll need a car.” He frowns.

“Why would you need a car, Sully-doo?” Ollie enters the kitchen like a fucking wet dream. The grey jeans Michael helped me pick—Raph just huffed in boredom the entire time—wrap his ass like a second skin. The dark green hoodie is tight and reaches under his stomach showing the light pink fabric of the shirt he’s wearing underneath. His hair is tied in a high ponytail, his eyes look bigger and lighter, and he smeared some shiny shit on his lips. I fucking like how more at ease with himself he seems to feel since he moved here.

“To go to school,” Sully replies with a mouth full of Rice Krispies, earning a snort from Ollie.

“You, driving? The city of Chicago already has a number one menace on wheels, can’t afford a number two.”

I know he’s talking about Lori. I remember his driving while stalking me, and he comes here almost every day—since he’s still jobless and has a lot of time on his hands—and never manages to park his car straight.

“I could be good at it,” Sully retorts defensively. “Better than you!”

Ollie is whipping some eggs, and while taking two mugs from the cabinet in front of him, I grope his ass, loving the way he pushes it more firmly into my hand. He smells like the honey soap I bought him and my cum, fucking delicious. When I turn, Sully, as always, pretends not to have noticed.

“I know how to drive, I just don’t have a license,” Ollie replies, just as defensive.

“Then you’ll both have to get one. I have enough cars in my garage for all of us,” I say, ending the argument, which I always find myself doing. Those two bickers the same way I do with my brothers. Maybe that’s why they were at ease last Sunday during Meg and Linda’s lunch. Sully acts a bit shy around my family, but I’m sure he’ll open up in time. Something Lori had no problem doing.

Sully drops his bowl in the sink—almost breaking it—and after donning his jacket, he slings his backpack on his shoulders, knocking down yesterday’s mail from the counter. I want to toss him an apple, but seeing how uncoordinated he seems to be, I just pass it to him. He smiles warmly at me and I feel damn good.

A loud honking comes from the front yard. Uri is here to pick him up and take him to school. My brothers are helping me keep an eye on him until this Lenny thing blows up. He went underground after he heard what happened to Dick, the paranoid shithead.

“I left a pamphlet for you on the table, Ollie. Later, bros,” Sully waves goodbye. *Bros*. I like it.

I set the coffee mugs down and grab the flyer from the wooden surface: Harold Washington City College Business Courses.

Ollie stares at it over his shoulder, and I can see the longing in his eyes before he turns and moves to the stove.

“Do you want to go to college again, kitty?” I ask, ready to give him whatever he wants. He shrugs, keeping his back to me.

I press my front to his back and wrap my arms around his lean body.



“Lori told me your idea to use those two floors on top of the warehouse as apartments for young people in need of a place to stay. It sounds great.” It really does. My Ollie has a big heart. And there are more boys and girls like him and Sully who’re just looking for a safe place to stay. “You should have told me, kitty. We can offer them a place to crash and a job working in the library café.”

“We?” He smiles, turning around in my arms. His happy *brackets* smile.

“They’d run shit-scared from me. You should take care of it.” I kiss his nose. “And get a degree, so you can also help me with office stuff, since you like it.”

“Really?”

I nod. I’ll need to get used to sharing my work, but I’ll do it gladly if it means having Ollie near me. Margery likes to have him around the office. They can talk flirtatiously for hours until I haul Ollie into my office and fuck his brain out—I soundproofed that room as well.

“You already thought this through? That was fast.” His hands are playing with my curls, massaging my scalp damn perfectly.

“Been thinking about it for a while. The college thing works perfectly with it.” I growl in bliss. “I’ll take you to school and pick you up every fucking day.”

“You just want to maul me in front of the other students to stake your claim.” He sucks on my neck hard, leaving *his* claim on me.

“And snarl at the teachers if they come too close to what’s mine.”

“Fuck, why does that turn me on?” He rubs his growing dick on my thigh.

“Because it’s fucking hot!” Lori’s voice is too loud for this early in the morning.

I groan, letting go of Ollie and taking a seat at the table. Lori takes off his red puffer, his golden nails looking all sparkly in the morning light.

“Since when do you have a key?” Ollie asks him.

“I found an extra one lying around. I’m efficient like that.” He’s wearing a large knit sweater, black leather shorts with fishnet stockings and a pair of red boots.

He kisses Ollie on the cheek and then he lifts his nose in the air and inhales deeply. “What smells so good?”

“Spinach and mozzarella omelet,” Ollie says. I know he’s happy to have his friend around, so I’m okay with it. Luckily, he’s not a cock blocker. Unluckily, he actually encourages us to fuck—where he can hear us.

“So, what are we doing today?” he asks while we are all eating at the table.

“Destroying another wall? And Rague, can you take off your shirt while doing it this time?” Lori comes to work with us at times. He doesn’t help in the least, just talks non-stop with Ollie and flirts with the other workers.

Ollie flips him off and places a possessive hand on my thigh.

Lori rolls his eyes at him. “Don’t be such a drama queen.”

“Oh no, the drama queen thing is all yours.” Ollie twirls his finger at him.

“Riiiiight, troubled, cocky fucker is more your lane.” Lori sniffs.

“I’m three seconds away from smearing your eyeliner.” Is that a real threat? Lori gasps with outrage written all over his face, and then hisses, “You wouldn’t dare!”

My front door chimes, saving me from a ridiculous fight.

It’s Gabe. He brought some contracts I asked him to look over.

I see his eyes zero in on Lori. And the glare Ollie’s friend sends back at him. The mutual dislike started from the first moment they met and seems to only keep growing the more they see each other.

An idea begins to form inside my head, and I file it for later.

“Aww Gabe, are you checking on me?” Lori’s glower turns into a teasing smile.

“Didn’t even know you were here,” he replies, toneless.

Lori pouts his lips. “Rami said he caught you checking out a very distinctive part of my body the other day.” And he delivers a loud slap on his ass to specify which part he’s talking about.

Did I imagine Gabe’s eyes following the movement?

“Your loudmouthed friend is barking up the wrong tree,” Gabe addresses Ollie, opening the two buttons of his cashmere coat and sitting at the table. My kitty looks confused.

“My brother is not gay,” I clarify. Uri gossiped about only seeing Gabe with women on his arms at those lavish lunch gatherings, galas, and charity dinners they sometimes go to. But this is the first time Gabe is actually confirming his heterosexuality.

“Okay,” Lori says sweetly, too sweetly.

My phone starts ringing, and Rami’s name appears on the screen. I push the speaker button after accepting the call.

“Rami, any news on Lenny?”

“The motherfucker hid in too fucking deep of a hole to be found.”

I growl angrily. I want to end him. We are now sure it was Lenny who caused those boys’ deaths, thanks to the bugs Clover put in his office. We discovered that Lenny, together with some fighters from his clandestine ring, were paid to beat those teens to death. We also learned that Lenny isn’t the one *providing* the boys, someone else does. And this person is still nameless to us. My brothers are taking turns at surveilling the place where

the beating happened. It's filled with shipping containers, too many to check. But I will if I have to.

Nobody's gone there in the past two weeks. My red haze attack ruined everything, since it's not a coincidence that Lenny vanished just as Dick *disappeared*—my brothers took care of the bodies and the house. Michael and Sari were only happy to use Oxy cleaners for the first time. And it seems to work well at erasing blood, and the smell doesn't alert as much as bleach does.

"Raph and I had a nice talk with Bill, Scorpion's manager, in the FUNS room." Meaning Rami tortured and killed him. Bill was a disgusting child molester. I wanted to take care of him, but leaving Ollie alone isn't an option at the moment. And we haven't talked about my side business again since that night. I'm waiting for him to make the first move.

"FUNS room?" Ollie asks.

"It's where they kill the donors," Lori explains while sipping his coffee. He must have accepted Michael's invitation to visit the base.

Ollie nods and then frowns, looking down at the table.

"Bill mostly cried and begged," Rami explains. "But told us that he heard Lenny having a call with *the Phoenix*."

"The Phoenix," Gabe repeats.

"That's how Lenny called them. Nobody has ever heard of them. Serena and I checked everywhere, on the dark web and on the street—nothing."

"They must be new," Gabe declares.

"Uh-huh. And they talked to Lenny about two more shipments of boys," Rami adds.

I growl. "Human trafficking."

“It looks like they are the ones delivering the boys. And they must be involved with the new drugs as well. Bill wasn’t very helpful after that, and Raph wanted to go back to Michael, so we cut it short.”

“We have only a fake name,” Ollie states, and that we makes me cover his hand on my thigh and squeeze.

“I might have another way,” Rami says, “Lenny never said the names of those other two fighters who like to beat up innocent boys. But I bet Scorpion is one of them.”

“Why?” Gabe asks.

“We crossed paths in a couple of bars.” When he says *crossed paths*, it means Rami made it happen. I didn’t know about this, but Rami always does shit without saying a word.

“Did you fuck him, Red Beard?” Lori derails the conversation.

“Who says I’m the top, Gremlin?” Rami replies.

“He definitely let the scorpion guy fuck him,” Lori mumbles.

“A very drunk Scorpion let slip a few things while we were talking a few nights ago that now finally make sense.” Rami explains. “I’m a mega idiot for not putting the puzzle pieces together. Rague, I’ll go get Scorpion with Uri, and take him to the base.”

I should be the one going. This is our case. But the thought of leaving Ollie alone feels fucking wrong. And he doesn't seem ready to want to explore my family business yet.

So I agree with Rami and then hang up.

“The base?” Ollie turns to me.

“It’s what we call the place where Michael and Sari work on the DNA samples and we kill the donors,” I tell him, without sugarcoating it.

He nods while his eyes lower to the table again.

I hear Ollie's phone ringing from our bedroom, and he quickly goes to retrieve it.

"Who is it?" Lori yells at him.

"Brad!" Ollie shouts back, walking down the hallway. They're screamers, I've learned that in the last few weeks.

"Brad?" he answers and stops dead in the kitchen doorway. "What do you mean they took him? Slow down."

I quickly go to Ollie.

Brad's agitated voice suddenly resounds in the room as Ollie's trembling fingers tap the speaker icon on his phone. "They took Sully!"

"What?" Lori jumps from his chair.

"Who?" Ollie is squeezing his phone so hard, his knuckles are turning white.

"I-I don't know. He came to see me train just like every morning before classes start. One moment he was waving at me from the stands, and the next, those guys were-were dragging him away."

I look at Gabe, but I see him already on the phone with Rami.

"Oh, God!" Ollie chokes out.

I try Sully's phone, but it goes straight to voicemail. Fuck!

"I'm so sorry, I tried to reach him, I ran like crazy, but I couldn't, I couldn't. They shoved him in a car and disappeared." Brad is a wreck. He's panting and swearing. He isn't the brightest bulb, but his kindness and loyalty make him a good friend.

"And nobody saw or heard anything? Didn't Sully scream or use one of the defense moves I showed you guys?" Lori questions him.

"There's nobody around the field at this hour. And Sully looked—"—Brad takes a big breath—"passed out when they carried him away."

“Did they knock him out? Drug him? Did he have a panic attack and faint?” Ollie is fisting the fabric of my shirt while listing all the possible scenarios, the panic dripping from his tone.

“They must have known that the place was deserted. They probably followed him for a few days.” Gabe is right. They waited for Uri to drop him off at school and for Brad to be busy.

“They? Who the fuck are they?” Ollie’s voice cracks at the end. He looks devastated. Worried out of his mind. His first reaction is always to protect his brother.

“It was too far, I didn’t see them well. I’m sorry. Tell me what to do. How can I help?” Brad pleads.

I wrap my hand around Ollie’s nape and grab his head to get his attention. “We’ll find him. I promise you. I’ll get him back.” I look straight into his eyes. “I’ll get Sully back.”

“Rami is checking all the cameras around the area,” Gabe explains, still on the phone with him. “He wants to talk to Brad to get all the details he can get about the car and the men.”

“Brad? My boyfriend’s brother is going to call you. Tell him everything, okay?” Ollie rushes out before ending the call. He wraps his trembling body tightly around me. I lift him into my arms and wish I could enjoy the fact that Ollie called me his boyfriend for the first time.



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## Chapter 14

*OLIVER*

The constant beeping sound wakes me up. I stiffen, but relax once again as soon as I feel and smell Rague all around me. I nuzzle his neck and inhale deeply, my dick twitching inside my pants. I'm on his lap in...a hospital room. The scent of lemony detergents, tangy-smelling plastic, and alcohol hits me as soon as I shift my stiff body. The sleepy fog in my brain clears and the memories from the last two days assault me.

After Brad's call, the waiting was atrocious. The longest, most brutally painful four hours of my life. It took Rami and the others four hours to find Sully. Four endless dark hours. And when I stormed into one of the hundreds of shipping containers in what looked like a scrapyard with Lori and Michael, after Rague and his brothers had cleared the area, the sight of my brother, bloody, broken, and unconscious on the dirty floor brought me to my knees. I can still feel the agonizing scream swelling and surging from deep inside my chest before it echoed along the long metal walls.

A part of me would have died with him that day if Michael hadn't found a faint pulse. The rush to the hospital holding Sully's bruised face on my lap was a blurry, chaotic mix of prayers and guilt. When the doctors took him away on the gurney, my muscles just gave out, all my strength abandoning me, and I would've dropped on the floor if Rague hadn't been there. I fell into his arms, gave him all my weight. And as he held me up, I hid my face against his shoulder, my hands fisting and pulling at his flannel shirt.

He didn't seem to care and let me cling to him. I cried into his chest, quiet, hot tears ran down my cheeks, yanking my heart out every time they hit his shirt. The pain was too much, I felt like it was suffocating me. My trembling body tried to disappear inside Rague, to melt into him and never be separated again. I wanted to stop feeling. To stop thinking. To stop being, just for a second.

"I'm here. I got you. I love you so fucking much," Rague murmured sweet, encouraging words while wiping the wetness from my face, running his fingers through my hair, stroking his warm hand on my back. His strong, kind presence and gentle touches inside that cold hospital waiting room soothed the bleeding wound in my heart that I knew would never fully heal. My body slowly relaxed into his. His immovable, shielding love settled over me.

Rague's brothers were all here like a tall, unbudgeable wall ready to protect me. They were seething; I could almost see the thick, growing fury turning the air unbreathable. I knew Rague was trying to control his anger as well, for me. But his body was vibrating under mine.

Me? In that moment, I just wanted my brother to pull through. And for my boyfriend's arms to keep me as close as they could because I needed him more than the air filling my lungs.

Three more hours of horrible thoughts shuffling through my head. Images of a world without Sully. Without his sweet smiles, clumsy steps, curious gazes, and slippery fingers. His big heart and kind behavior, smart replies, and awkward shrugs. Then a doctor entered the room and called my name, and I almost fainted with relief when I heard the words: out of danger.

Sully was fine. He was fine. Two days had passed. They removed the tube that was helping him breathe yesterday afternoon, but he hadn't opened his eyes yet.

"Do you want a coffee, kitty?" Rague's raspy morning voice makes me tilt my head up. I nod and give him a small peck before standing up to stretch my back. Rague's curls are a mess from my fingers and the rough sleep, but in a hot, unkempt way.

"I think they'll need some as well." I point at Lori and Gabe, sleeping on the other side of the room. My friend is lying on a chair, his head on Gabe's lap. Rague's brother has a hand on Lori's shoulder, and even in his sleep, he looks all put-together, while Lori's mouth is ungracefully wide open. It's kind of weird to see them like this...touching and all cozy.

Then I move my eyes to Brad. He hasn't left Sully's side since they brought him here from the recovery ward yesterday. He feels responsible for what happened. His head is propped on his hand, wavy blond hair falling on his forehead. His athletic jock body barely fits the plastic hospital chair. Rague had to ask for a bigger one, and a very kind nurse brought an armchair—or maybe Meg's friendship with a couple of people on the hospital board of directors made that happen.

Rague leaves, and I sit on the edge of the bed, taking Sully's bruised hand in mine. He tried to fight back—all his knuckles are blackened—but it wasn't enough. They broke his nose, two ribs, tore his spleen, and

perforated a lung—that's why the doctors had to operate on him for hours. Those bastards also dislocated his left shoulder and wrist and covered him in cuts and bruises.

All the relief and gratefulness I feel at having him back with me is washed away by uncontrollable rage. My brother is the most goofy, gentle soul, and they almost killed him. And for what? Fucking sick entertainment. There was a camera in the shipping container. They took a video of it. A fucking video of an innocent boy being beaten almost to death. Did they do the same with the other boys? Were they killed to amuse morbid, sadistic people?

I could never stomach to watch that video, but Rami will tell me who's responsible. There were four evil men in that container with my brother, one died, but the other three—including Lenny and Scorpion—are at the base.

"I'll make them pay, Sully-doo," I tell his prone body. "I'll make them regret the moment they laid a finger on you."

I suddenly feel Rague's warm chest behind me, and I instinctively lean into it, quickly wiping away the tear that hits my cheek. No more. Now it's time to get even.

"I'll do it, kitty," Rague says.

"No. It's my responsibility and pleasure." Before he can say anything else, Gabe wakes up with a jolt, pushing Lori's head off him.

"What the fuck?" My best friend yells, feet still on the chair while his hands are gripping the armrest to prevent himself from falling face-first on the floor.

Brad springs off his chair and looks around, disoriented, before his eyes focus on Sully, and his shoulders sag seeing him still sleeping. Rague hands

me a hot paper cup of coffee.

“A little fucking help!” Lori sputters from his strained position, and Brad quickly goes to him. When he manages to get himself in a standing position, he runs a hand through his curls, and after glancing at Sully and me, he concentrates his sullen look on Gabe. “What the fuck is wrong with you?”

“I woke up with spit on my thousand-dollar suit pants.” Gabe points at the dark, wet spot on his thigh.

Lori keeps talking, disregarding Gabe’s statement. “The list would be too long to finish in a damn day.”

“What are you whining about this time?” Sully’s hoarse voice turns all the eyes in the room on him.

“Sully-doo!” I croak as I delicately cup his face and bump his forehead against mine, the same way we’ve always done, ever since we were kids. Rague’s fingers are stroking my back, and for one blissful moment, I’m at peace.

“I’ll find a nurse,” Gabe says from somewhere in the room, and I pull back, staring again in my brother’s shiny eyes.

“How do you feel, Sully-doo?” Lori asks him. I can hear the tears in his voice, and I feel my vision getting blurry.

“Like I’ve been spit out of a blender,” he replies; his smile is a bit forced.

“Are you in pain?” I ask him. Fuck my trembling words.

He tries to shift and winces. His body is covered in stitches and bandages under the hospital gown.

“Don’t move.”

“The doctor is coming,” Gabe lets us know, walking back into the room.

“I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry,” Brad cries out.

“Hey, it’s not your fault. They injected me with something,”—the same drug they used on the other seven boys—“before I could even realize...they ...were close...” Sully’s coughing stops him from continuing. “Dry.” He points at his throat when I ask him what’s wrong.

I leave my cup on the small table near the bed and grab the water glass, bending the straw toward his mouth. He takes small sips, and after a few seconds, is done.

“It’s not your fault,” I repeat my brother’s words, looking at Brad. “It’s those men’s.”

Sully’s eyes turn watery, and he closes them, letting the tears run down. “How did you find m-me?”

“Rami tracked Scorpion’s phone. It led us to the right shipping container,” Gabe explains.

Sully starts shivering after hearing Scorpion’s name, and I grab his hand again, giving it a comforting squeeze.

Motherfucker. Now everything is starting to clear. *I* was supposed to fight against Scorpion. *I* was supposed to get beaten to a pulp and die. That’s why Dick insisted on the fight, and why Lenny was going to pay a larger sum for it. I’m not a teen, but I look like one, and I guess that it was too great a temptation for Dick to get rid of me and at the same time get paid.

Sully took my place. They grabbed him because in the past weeks I’ve never been alone. Rague has always been with me. Even when Sully was taken, and I feel so fucking guilt-ridden. I should have protected him better. I don’t need to know what they did to him. We have the damn video that shows us what happened.

“You’re safe, Sully.” Rague moves to place a big hand on my brother’s shoulder. “I won’t let anything like this happen to you again.”

“You promise?” Sully’s barely-there whisper between the sobs makes my throat ache. I’m trying so hard to keep myself together that I think I’m going to be sick.

“I swear,” Rague replies.

“You’re under our protection now, kiddo,” Rami declares from the doorway.

“You, your kiddo brother, and...the gremlin.”

Lori huffs and mumbles, “Like I need protection.”

“And Brad?” Sully hiccups, stretching his arm toward his friend, who promptly comes closer.

“If you vouch for him.” Rami nods.

“I do too,” I say. Not that Brad needs it. He comes from a rich family, and he’s built.

“Me, three. Brad is the best himbo to ever himbo.” Lori’s statement makes Brad blush.

“Then it’s settled,” Rague grunts.

“Here,” Brad pulls a glasses case from his bag and hands it to me. I take out Sully’s extra frames and push them on his nose. “I took them from your locker at school. I thought that maybe you’d need them.”

“You’re the best, Bradley.” Sully’s small smile makes Brad lean forward on the hospital bed and hug him, making my brother jerk in pain.

Brad quickly pulls back. “Fuck, I’m such a doofus.”

“It’s okay,” my brother replies with a pinched expression.

The doctor finally arrives. He asks Sully some questions while checking him over. When he seems satisfied, he lets us know that he’s on his way toward a full recovery and gives him something for the pain. Thirty minutes later, Sully is sleeping again, and my exhausted body decides to follow the example.

When I wake up again, Raph is staring at me from the other side of the room. The hairs on the back of my neck stand. Admittedly, it's more the empty stare than the psycho vibe that creeps me out.

My brother is sleeping, but he looks better. His nose is still covered with a bandage, and the bruises around his left eye and jaw are purple, but his breath is calm and even.

Michael, Meg, and Lori enter the room, saving me from an awkward as fuck conversation. Meg comes to give me a hug.

"So glad to see you awake and smiling again, kiddo," she whispers in my ear.

"She likes you," Michael stage whispers. "She's never that touchy-feely with the rest of us."

"It's because most of you don't want to." She sniffs.

"I'm not like Bones here," Lori points at Michael. "I want a hug."

Meg waves him closer with an exasperated smile, and he gets a warm one.

"Where's Rague?" It's the first thing I ask.

Michael looks at Raph. "He went to the base."

"Without me?" I ask incredulously. I don't like it.

"You didn't look very keen about learning that part of him." Lori says and coughs. I definitely swept the whole gory family business under the carpet. Since when am I such a coward?

Raph shrugs. "He needs to do what he does best—punish evil."

"It's not his fight," I hiss.

"It kind of is, Ollie," Michael interjects, reaching his fiancé.

Meg agrees with a tilt of her head. The grey strands among the dark ones give her a wise, sweet appearance. "Rague cherishes what belongs to him



dearly. He recognizes you and Sully as his. He'd do anything for you guys. Those people hurt you. He needs to make them suffer the consequences."

"Rague is all about punishments and atonement," Raph confirms with a creepy smirk. "It could turn into carnage with him at the wheel, are you sure you want to see that?"

I grit my teeth. I know he's testing me, the scary fucker. "Worse than Dick's house?" I bite my lower lip hard. "I told him I wanted to do it together."

"It's been almost two days, the donors have to be dealt with."

"And he thought you wanted to stay with Sully," Lori gives me a half-smile. That's so damn sweet, and I fucking love him more—if that's even possible—but... "I need to see it's finished. Done. With my own eyes. That there's no more danger around the corner."

"There's always danger around the corner," Meg wisely reminds me.

"I meant not from them."

Lori sighs. "Let's go." He waves me toward the door. But I glance at Sully.

"We'll stay here. He'll never be alone," Michael assures me. "Ollie, when I was in your position a very wise woman gave me good advice,"—he looks at Meg before shifting his gaze to me again—"You're Rague's anchor, help him stay on the right path."

I inhale deeply, and looking straight into his eyes, I give him a firm nod. I'll walk buck ass naked before him if that's the only way to make him follow me on that path.

After glancing at my brother one last time, I follow Lori down the hospital corridor and into the elevator.



Lori hasn't stopped talking about all the cool, gory things I'm about to witness as he parks his car inside the large garage, hitting the car's bumper on the wall. Whereas, I feel a ball of anxiety rising from my gut toward my throat.

He must see something on my face because he turns in his seat and says, "If at any point you want to leave just say the word and we are out. Okay? No pressure." He squeezes my hand, and I notice his chipped gold nail polish—he hates when it gets ruined, it drives him absolutely bonkers. But he put that aside to be next to Sully and me.

"You're annoying as shit, and I want to strangle you every fucking day," I blurt out.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" He drops my hand like a hot potato and glares at me.

"But..."

"I don't fucking know if I want to hear what's coming next, you sulky bitch!" He pouts.

"Would you let me finish, you hag!" I yell. "I'm so damn lucky to have you in my life."

“I want to punch you in the face before hugging you, how do you do that?”  
He groans.

“It’s a gift.” My smile drops quickly as I remember where we are going.

“What if I can’t do it?”

“Then you can’t. Rague loves you no matter what, you idiot. The rest is just a jar of pickles.”

“A jar of pickles?”

“Of no importance,” he slowly enunciates for me. And the strangling urge is back.

We get out of the car and the secret agent stuff awaits. Serena scans Lori’s hand and then the tool wall slides back to reveal a descending metallic staircase. No bugs, thankfully.

“Why is it always the basement?” I stress.

“Cliché, I know, but that’s the only banality about this place, trust me.” He sounds excited, and I have to admit that I am a tiny bit as well. Then I hear the scream and a thud and a dreadful sensation infiltrates my chest. I go down the last two steps and see Rami, Uri, and Linda standing in front of a glass wall. I can’t see what’s beyond them, but I can hear the moans of pain and Rague’s angry growls. Closing my eyes, I take a few deep breaths, trying to ground myself.

When I open them again, there’s a gorgeous man standing in front of me. Sari. His delicate beauty leaves me speechless for a few seconds.

“Hey, Ollie, so glad to see you again. You look a bit pale,” he tells me with an understanding smile.

“It’s his first time, Angel.” Lori reminds him before the others, hearing our voices, turn toward us.

“We have another blood virgin in the house, lovely,” Rami jokes. His beard is getting ridiculously long now—*Cast-Away* long—especially compared to his shaved head.

“The only virgin here is the rum and Coke you’re drinking,” Lori purrs back at him.

Rami frowns, “It’s only Coke, no rum, Gremlin.”

“Exactly.” My friend yanks the can from Rami’s hand and takes a sip. “Try to keep up, Red Beard.”

“Hey kiddo, how’s Sully?” Linda asks.

“Still sleeping. But okay, despite everything.”

“We’ll all help him get through this, and if he needs to talk to someone with a degree on the wall, Meg is always available.” I only nod at her. In truth, I haven’t thought that much ahead, I just want him back at home.

“That’s the lab,” Sari tells me, when he sees me looking at the room through the glass door on my left. “There’s also Rami’s workspace, and on the other side, an open space with a nice kitchen, sofas, and a TV to chill.” He points in the general direction. “The guys take DNA samples—blood, tissues, saliva, and more—from the donors, and depending on what I’m working on or is needed at that moment, I use them accordingly,” he adds. Rague told me Sari is a famous researcher working for a big pharmaceutical company Raph is the president of.

“Oh, the Northwest Memorial was able to use the bone marrow we sent on the patient with leukemia.” Sari beams at Rami’s words.

So, they really do help people. I mean I knew they did, but now I’m actually getting it.

“How about organ transplants?” Lori’s question is a good one. They could save a lot of people that way. A guy who works at the recycling plant has

his daughter on a waiting list, and he complained about how long it will take.

“As a consequence of our *peculiar* methods, in most cases, it’s impossible to donate organs. We don’t want to get caught or have doctors lose their jobs or worse. Rami is great at creating fake paperwork, but he’s not God,” Uri explains.

“Take that back, infidel!” Rami sniffs at him.

“You should try harder to find a way,” I blurt out.

“And look who’s fighting for our cause now.” *Am I? Yes, I definitely am.* Linda’s words catapult me back to the reason why I am here.

“Never liked black and white colors. Grey has always made more sense to me,” I tell her, and she regards me with what looks like interest.

“Is Rague getting anything out of them?” Uri asks. “Can’t hear anything.”

Linda glances back at me, and then pushes a button on a small screen I just now notice is on the glass wall, turning the sound back on.

A horrible, gurgling noise fills the room. Then a crack followed by an agonizing scream.

Rami shifts his big body to the right, letting me finally see what I’m hearing.

It’s a room covered in... large pink plastic sheets with some kind of design on them. Gabe is leaning on the far wall, arms crossed, bored expression. There are two chairs in the middle on which two naked men are sitting, hands and feet tied—one is Lenny, the other guy is the one who filmed the beating. Scorpion is hanging a couple of feet from the ground on the left wall, his bare body is all bloody. His arms are stretched over his head, hands cuffed to two big metal chains.

Rague is standing in front of him, head canted to the side, and God, he looks so big and threatening and...striking. Here in this pink torture room, under the strong white lights, he seems to be in his natural element. His eyes are so dark, like two bottomless black holes. The void expression turns his facial features into a sharper, harsher mask. He's ready to inflict pain and enjoying it—just like when he fights in the ring. I'm mesmerized by him. His power, his control, his hardness. All I want to do is watch him.

"What's with the weird plastic every time?" Lori's voice shakes me, and I realize my dick is half-stiff. Fucking hell, this is a new kink.

"Rami," Uri and Sari say at the same time. They exchange a smile, and then Sari lays his head on his brother's shoulder. His sweet disposition reminds me of Sully. His face morphs into a bruised, bloody mess, his body lying on the hospital bed. Broken, pale, defenseless. Anger rushes so quickly inside me that I have to grind my teeth to stop my snarl.

"Did you watch the video?" I ask Rami, spitting the words through my gritted teeth. He nods gravely. "Who?" I don't need to add anything else, he knows who I'm inquiring about. The fuckers who almost killed my little brother.

"Scorpion, Lenny and the other fighter Uri shot and killed in the container. They all hurt Sully."

My brain freezes. My eyes zero in on the two pieces of shit, and I'm moving without a thought. I try the handle, but it doesn't budge.

"You need the code." Uri taps some numbers in a small panel near the door and it clicks open.

I only vaguely notice Rague turning my way because I'm too focused on my target. I dart in front of Scorpion, and pulling my arm back, I deliver a powerful punch to his face. The sound of bone hitting bone spurs me on,

and I keep giving it to him, pummeling the fucker's chest and face, pouring all my wrath on him. He doesn't deserve mercy, not after what he did to my brother and those other boys. He deserves to suffer and scream and bleed.

When I stop, I feel drops of sweat running down my spine and on the side of my face. Scorpion is a bloody mess, broken jaw and cheek, black swollen eyes, red saliva dripping out of his split lips. His torso is a patchwork of bruises.

The smell of iron and piss hits my nose, and I take a couple of steps back, realizing there's a yellow pool under him. My back hits a wall of muscle, and I jerk forward before realizing it's Rague. Fuck, I'm edgy. He wraps a strong arm around me and kisses my head so fucking sweetly.

"Better?" he asks, nose nuzzling my hair.

"No," I croak. "I need more." The confession leaves my lips when my gaze falls on Lenny. I want to fucking obliterate him.

"Have at it, kitty."

"We need answers, guys. Have your revenge, but leave him with his tongue and some teeth to talk," Gabe says from his position on the other side of the room. He's here to intervene if Rague needs him to since this is a revenge kill for him. They really follow Linda's code.

I find myself smirking at him. "I'll do my best." I'm actually feeling good about this. I never enjoyed fighting, not only because Dick forced me and took all the money I earned from it, but I also found it meaningless. But this? This has a meaning. It's for Sully and all the poor boys before him.

Rague lifts my scraped, bloody knuckles and tuts. "No more hurting yourself. Choose from the tray."

He means the table on our left filled with different kinds of *tools*: knives, axes, a gun, a machete, a saw. I pucker my lips at them and grab the two

silver brass knuckles.

“I’m not here to torture, just need to give back what they forced on Sully,” I explain.

“Whatever you need, ” Rague tells me. He eases back and chooses a knife from the tray. Then he proceeds to slap Lenny so hard that his face twists almost all the way back.

The blond fucker moans and starts waking up. Rague moves to the other guy on the chair and gives him the same wake-up call.

Lenny opens his eyes, frowning when he tries to move his hands. He looks down at his naked body and then up at me. At the room. Rague. The people behind the glass wall, pausing on Rami—who waves at him with a happy smile—and back at me.

“What the fuck?” he utters, and hearing his indignant voice compels me to slam my brass-knuckled fist right into his nose. The disturbing cracking sound of the bone breaking makes me flinch. I know that noise well, usually coming from my body.

When I was hitting Scorpion, I was lost in my rage, didn’t care about anything but fucking him up. Now, though my anger is still hitting the roof, I’m also utterly conscious of what I’m doing. But Sully’s battered face is imprinted in my mind, and I let myself enjoy Lenny’s moan.

“Is this some kind of revenge for Sully?” he pants, darting an angry look at me. I grab his hair and throw another punch, feeling the metal sinking into his skin before hitting bone.

“Don’t you dare say his name. You almost killed him! And for what? A video that will get you some extra bucks, you sick bag of shit?” I hiss in his face.



“It should have been you in that shipping container, not your little brother. What happened to him it’s on you,” Lenny throws at me, and I reply with my fist right on his jaw again. It doesn’t make him stop talking, though. “It was Richard’s idea to use you. He was so eager to see you die, he even wanted to be part of it.” He lets out a short, bitter laugh. “Did you find our plan out? Is that why you got rid of him first?”

“The boys you killed, did Dick choose them as well?” I ask him, ignoring his question.

Lenny snorts.

“The Phoenix did, then.” His eyes widen at hearing the name. “How do they choose?”

Rague’s growling makes me check on him. His face is void of any emotion as he twists the guy’s wrist until the snap of the bone resounds in the room. A high wail tears from the donor’s throat.

“You like to watch boys getting beaten to death,” Rague snarls, making the guy tremble like a leaf in the breeze.

“Sss-orry,” he sputters from his gaping mouth. But Rague doesn’t seem to hear or care, and he stabs the knife in the guy’s shoulder. He has only a moment for the shock to register on his face before I can see agony contort his features.

I feel quite blasé about what I’m witnessing. I’ve seen violence perpetuated by Dick and his friends too many times. But right now, the person hurting actually deserves it. Because this guy was behind the camera filming Sully being attacked, and he didn’t do anything to help him.

His screams devolve into sobs and hysterical whimpers when Rague wraps his fingers around the handsaw.

“Tell me how the Phoenix choose and Hulk won’t use the saw on you.”

Lenny curls up his lips showing me his teeth. “He made a website to lure them in. Don’t know what kind. But that’s how he chooses them.”

A website, shit! And the Phoenix is a *he*.

“What’s this, ah? Isn’t this a live show as well?” Lenny barks, glancing at the glass wall.

I tighten my grip in Lenny’s hair. “Live?” I thought they were recording it, to sell it on the internet.

“You don’t know shit!” He sneers at my shocked expression. And I deliver two quick hard punches right in his stomach, making him bend forward and gag.

“We will after you talk,” Linda says from behind the wall.

I fist his hair and roughly shove him against the back of the chair. Lenny’s lips quiver as he pants.

“You don’t fucking know what you are up against,” he scoffs. “You think this is only about live beatings? Clueless freaks. I don’t know who you are.” His eyes dart to Rague and then Rami. “But the Phoenix is going to crush you all.” His bloody smile disappears the next instant, replaced by terrifying shock.

Staring straight at Lenny, Rague yanks the knife out of the other donor’s shoulder and drives it from above into his head.

I hear some enthusiastic clapping from behind me, but my gaze is fixed on Rague. On his face, which lacks any kind of remorse or guilt, the slow rise and fall of his wide chest, his bloody hands, and the huge bulge in his pants. A sudden throb of arousal pulses through me, tightening my groin. Is it nuts that I feel the carnal urge to climb Rague like a tree after watching what he’s done? Am I sick in the head? I am. I know I am. There’s something

wrong with me, I've known it for years. But if this is one of the things that makes Rague and me right for each other, so be it. I don't give a fuck.

"Your turn." Rague points the handsaw he has yet to use at Lenny. He closes the distance between them, then swings the serrated blade down, sinking the sharp small teeth into Lenny's knee.

His cry is loud and followed by curses. And I punch him once again in the stomach to make him stop. The forward jerk of his body jolts the handsaw stuck in his leg, and more blood rolls down his calf dripping on the pink plastic covering the floor.

"Carl Manner, Paul Cleeve, Gene Alvin Sloan, George Fallon, Sebastian Tom Jenkins, Fredrick Cole and James Ian Patterson. Those are the names of the seven boys you hurt and killed. They and Sully are the reason why you're here." *Rague remembers all of their names?*

"Who's the Phoenix? How do you contact him? What else do you do for him?"

"Fuck you, Oliver! Fuck all of you! I won't say a damn word to any of you crazy fucks," he screams, spit flying from his mouth, sweat coming down his reddening face. I can see the desperation hiding behind the anger. He's scared shitless. But who wouldn't be, knowing that the end is near and that it won't be painless?

"Did you enjoy pounding defenseless boys?" Rague says menacingly, pushing the blade deeper into the flesh. Lenny screams while tears start to fall.

"Hearing them beg? Watching the light die in their eyes?" More blood flows.

"It was...just...business." Lenny's voice has turned into a plead. He's a shrieking mess, pathetic and weak.

“You’re lying.” Rague yanks the saw from Lenny’s leg, wrenching a piercing cry out of the fucker’s chest, and then he grabs an axe and drops it down chopping Lenny’s hand right off. One breath of deafening silence, then the high-pitched shrieks Lenny lets out are dripping with shock and pain.

I’m taken aback by the off-with-the-hand part as well, but even more by what I’m feeling. Out of the corner of my eye I see a bloody hand on the pink floor, but my focus is entirely on my merciless, hot boyfriend.

“You enjoyed the *business* and it led you to an atrocious death.” Rague’s cold, rumbling voice fills me with more *lust*, and I feel my revenge slipping away, replaced by crude, visceral want.

Gabe suddenly appears near us. “Let Uri work on him.”

Rague grunts in disagreement.

“If the shithead knows something he’ll sing like a canary with him. Uri is a master in the art of pain.” Is he? I turn to look at him through the glass. His long dreads and numerous piercings don’t scream pain inflictor to me.

“I can do that too,” Rague tells his brother. Gabe glances at me with a silent request, and I’m only happy to oblige.

*Anchor time.* I drop the brass knuckles and grab Rague’s arm. When he lowers his gaze on me, I show him the painful need I have for him, knowing he can’t resist that. “I’m done.”

He studies my eyes for a second, then grabs my hand and drags me to a door on the left, hidden behind the plastic. It’s a bathroom, with four showers a large rectangular sink, and shelves covered in cleaning products. Rague’s big body pushes me inside from behind, and I hear the door lock clicking just before his hard cock pushes against my back. Fuck! Am I really going to do this? His family is in the adjacent room, torturing people.

His hand wraps around my neck while the other covers my stiff cock, and suddenly I don't give a fuck about anything else. I shove all those thoughts away and moan desperately for him.

With a sexy growl to his voice, he says, "It turned you on, didn't it? Seeing me hurt those donors. Watching me punishing them for what they've done. You're trembling with desire."

All of it is true, the blood on his hands and both our clothes should make me cringe, push him away with disgust, instead it arouses me in a way I'd have never thought possible.

"Now you want to be fucked by the beast."

"I want your beauty to fuck me like a beast." That gets a groan out of him. The smile trying to curl my lips is full of sin. My cock thickens achingly against his hand.

He turns my head toward him and takes my mouth. My brain gets wondrously empty of all my thoughts as our lips move against each other. God, this beast of a man. He shifts his grip on me, holding me firm, his fingers tightening on my jaw, his thumb pressing around my neck. He coaxes my mouth open, spearing his tongue in. We're all teeth and tongues, fervor and passion. My fingers twist through his curls while I grind my ass against his big cock, feeling my body thrumming with want. His hands are pulling at my clothes, and soon, my hoodie and tank top are lying on the floor next to my shoes and jeans.

As he takes off his bloody shirt, I enter one of the showers and start the water—hoping it will drown out the noises I'll surely make. Then I grab the perfume-free body soap—this will have to do since we don't have lube—and slick my fingers with it. I place a hand on the wall, push my ass up and

open my legs, turning my head toward him as I thrust two fingers inside me.

Rague's hand freezes on the front of his pants, his dark eyes flaring. His chest is rising faster than normal as he stares at my pumping hand. The air around us is suddenly crackling with the intensity of our desire.

I add another finger and let out a slutty moan while I fuck myself on them. I need him to take me so badly. Rail me and pin me down and own my ass. I'm so desperate for it that I grimace at myself until I'm pushed against the shower wall, face pressing into the cold tiles, water hitting my arm and hip. Rague spreads my legs wider with his hairy thigh, and a large blob of cold body soap drips between my butt cheeks just before he drives inside.

"Is this what you want?" he asks in a low, rough voice. He grabs my chin in a punishing grip and angles my face back, so that I'm looking into his eyes when I feel him shove deeper within me. He grunts as his cock slides home, and his hips hit my ass, taking my breath away. His jaw is tight. His eyes are blazing.

The neediness inside me settles as I feel the usual burn of his cock stretching me and filling me so damn fully. I shout his name when he grinds against me, opening me up even more. He responds with a choked, groaning noise. His head falls back as he starts to ride my ass.

"I'll give it to you hard. Get what I fucking need. What we both need."

"Yeah, just like that," I beg him. My body jerks with every hard thrust, his hips bruising the soft skin of my ass for how hard he's pistoning into me. And all I want is more.

His grip on my hip tightens as he fucks me harder, rougher, driving that thick, fat dick inside me again and again.

I drop my hand to grab mine, but he bats it away with a snarl. There's a possessive gleam in his hungry, dominating eyes, and I'd be amused if I wasn't so damn desperate to come.

He jackhammers relentlessly inside me, hitting my prostate every damn time. "You can fucking take it. All of it. Your ass is filled to the brim." He slaps it, making me whimper. "But I want to stuff you more. Need more," he growls and grabs my thigh, lifting it high on the side, opening me even more to his onslaught. *God, he's reaching even deeper now.*

"Tell me you're mine," he snarls. He pulls back on my half-loose ponytail, causing my neck to bend and my torso to arch more. The water cascades down on us from the side, our bodies are slick with it and sweat.

"I said," he slaps my ass so fucking hard. The sting makes me clench around him. And damn, I feel like his cock is growing even bigger. "Tell me." *Slap.* I moan. "You are." *Slap, slap.* "Mine!" He shoves his shaft so deep, I almost feel it in my throat.

"Fuuuck! Of course, I'm yours when you're balls-deep inside me and drilling me like there's no tomorrow, you beast!" I retort, earning another slap and then the pounding of my life.

"That damn sassy mouth," he pants. "I fucking love the hell out of it. I fucking love you." His sudden declaration makes my heart detonate with fucking adoration and obsession.

After what we've gone through together, I feel like this is not only the union of our bodies, but our souls are intertwined as well.

I groan, arching up to meet each of his thrusts, scratching my fingers on the wall and writhing on his cock. "I love you, Rague."

Another ball-tingling grunt comes out of him. "Say it again." His voice is rough and a little raw.

“I love you more than anything.” I sound raspy and choked.

Suddenly, my orgasm crashes into me without warning. My balls tighten, and a long moan escapes as wave after wave of pleasure hits me. I cover the shower tiles with thick ropes of cum, my walls pulsing around his cock, sucking it deeper—never wanting to let go. Rague lets out a feral growl, slamming his hips forward harder, faster, making my orgasm last longer and my eyes cross.

*So good!*

He lets my leg down, and I move my hands back and open my ass cheeks to give him a better view of his big cock spearing my hole.

“Fuck, kitty,” he croaks, and I feel his thumb brushing my stretched rim.

“In me,” I beg, tightening around him. “Come deep inside me.”

Rague pulls hard on my hair and snarls in my ear. His cock throbs as he buries all ten long inches in. And I cry out as I feel him pouring and pumping his thick, warm cum inside. He groans while I’m milking him for all he’s got. His head drops back, exposing the thick column of his throat that I want to bite and cover in hickeys.

His hips continue to grind and twitch as he chases his bliss before collapsing on top of me—catching his weight with a hand on the wall.

Our breaths are coming in short, sharp bursts. Fuck, I came untouched. Never happened before. And I want to do it again. Not right now, but damn, that was unbelievable.

“Good boy,” he breathes, and I preen at his praise.

“Good beastie,” I tease back, and he huffs with amusement.

He slips out of me, and I wince at the sudden emptiness, but then he spins me and envelops me in his arms. I feel like my entire body is made of jelly. I’m at peace, almost happy—all things considered.



I rest one hand on his chest, and the hardness of it soothes something deep inside me. My other arm curls back, my hand grabs his wrist to find the burned skin there. The fingertips trail over the raised lines of the number six and I feel him sigh before his fingers lace with mine and he moves our intertwined hands over my scarred chest.

“You’re eyes, kitty, they are the most powerful opponent I’ve ever encountered. They conquered me and became the most essential thing in my life.” His whispered words quickly reach inside my heart and find a permanent, safe place near the other sweet confessions this incredible man gives me daily.

I gaze up, and he’s wearing an expression of absolute adoration. He lowers his head and a low growl leaves him as he kisses my mouth, slow and lazy. And in this moment, I know without a doubt that I’ll never be alone again. Raguel Carver will never leave my side. He’ll possessively and obsessively protect me from anything. And I’ll fight him, just a little, so that he’ll have to remind me who owns my ass.

I suck on his lower lip and sink my teeth into the flesh, hard enough to make him groan. In his gaze I can detect lust, and a promise of retribution that not even my very sweet *I love you* is able to assuage.

*Give it all to me, beastie. I can take it. All of you.*



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## Epilogue

### *RAGUE*

I can't help the deep satisfaction within me as I glance at Ollie looking thoroughly fucked and covered in my scent while we walk inside Raph and Michael's building. A quickie in my car this morning assuaged my lust for now, but I know I'll need to stuff him full again later.

I grunt at the bellman as we cross the entrance to the elevator. My hand squeezes his as Ollie talks about Sully. A month has passed since the day we found him in that shipping container. Physically, he's doing much better. But the traumatic event took a toll on his mental health. His panic attacks have worsened. The nightmares are less frequent now but still afflict him at night. His talks with Meg help, though. He'll go back to school next month, and Linda found him a part-time job at a vet clinic, starting this summer. He'll be busy. Meg said that having a routine will give him more stability, balance, and comfort.

Ollie has been acting like a mama bear around his brother. All of us have. Sully shoved us out of the house today, wanting to spend some time with Brad, without us looming over him.

The elevator opens, and as we're entering, Lori's voice calls from behind us. "Wait for me!"

Ollie frowns and starts randomly pushing the elevator buttons, punching the whole panel when the doors don't close. "You need the code for the penthouse, kitty," I tell him, tapping it in.

He huffs and turns his head away from Lori as the elevator starts to ascend.

"What did you do?" I ask suspiciously at Lori. My kitty is upset, and I don't fucking like it when he's upset.

"Moi?" Lori pushes his perfectly manicured hand to his skinny chest.

I growl, but he just sniffs at me.

Ollie presses a calming hand on my chest while telling his friend off, "I can't believe you told Sully but not me!"

"You don't answer your phone anymore," Lori counters.

"I do."

"How about yesterday?" Lori doesn't miss a beat.

"I was incapacitated." Ollie's cheeks turn slightly pink, and I know he's remembering how I tied him to the bed and fucked the hell out of him.

"Stop that post-fucking dazed expression, you wanker!" Lori yells. "And I thought bros were before hoes."

"Am I the hoe in this?" My eyebrows kick up.

"Yes!" They both say, exchanging a small conspiratorial smile.

Ah! Need to learn not to get between these two. I am bigger than both of them combined, but they can bury me speechless in their sassiness.

"Rague needs to vent his anger, you know that!" Ollie reminds him.

“On your ass? And don’t act like you don’t enjoy it, Samantha Jones.” Lori derisive tone is loud inside the elevator. “This is your fault, Rachel Carver.” He points his Christmas-red nailed finger at me.

I groan. *Rachel?*

“You get his surname right but not his first name?” Ollie snorts.

Lori ignores him. “You and your magic dick have hypnotized my friend.”

My boyfriend giggles, and that happy sound makes me smile. He does love *beauty*.

Not happy in the least, Lori tries to shove me, but it’s like a fly attempting to move a bull. I don’t budge and almost wheeze a laugh, when I see his red face. His sour expression suddenly turns into an evil smile—which always precedes chaos.

“Whatever it was you two were doing this morning in the back of Rague’s pickup in the warehouse parking lot, sounded...exquisite.”

We were...celebrating. The library café is done—it just needs to be furnished. Next week, we’ll start working on the two floors above it.

“I wouldn’t have let my boyfriend dick me if I knew my perverted friend was spying from the bushes.”

“Spying from the bushes? I bought a pair of binoculars since the stalker adventure; I watched you two blokes from the comfort of my car.”

My exasperated grunt is covered by the ding of the elevator as we arrive on the top floor and directly into the penthouse.

“He’s joking,” Ollie assures me. I fucking hope so.

Getting inside where the others are doesn’t shut Lori up, though.

“I would be a terrible friend if I didn’t encourage you to keep having as much King Kong sex as you can in very public places,” he whisper-yells.

“Seriously, Ollie you sound like an ambulance siren—ouch!”

Ollie's fingers dig into his friend's forearm, the skin whitening under the pressure. "Shut up!"

Rami and Gabe are on the long sofa in the spacious living room, Michael and Sari are preparing drinks in the kitchen, and all their eyes turn to us.

"Okay, you brute!" Lori rubs his arm, taking a few steps away from Ollie.

"Just let me know when you and KKJ do the nasty again. Consider it a service to help the needy." He points to himself.

"Needy? Like you don't see action as well." Ollie snorts. "How about Luke?"

Lori seems very focused on removing a nonexistent piece of lint from his red sweater.

Ollie keeps going, "The guy you told Sully about, but not me, remember him? And don't roll your eyes at me, Daria! Later, I want all the details."

I sit on the sofa, and Ollie plops down next to me, slinging both legs over mine as I grab his ass and press him into my side.

"Details about what?" Lori asks too innocently.

"I swear to God, I will throttle you. You will tell me about your hot encounter with the barista later or find a new best friend," Ollie threatens.

"Why later? Spill it now! I'd love a piece of barista as well." Rami stares at Lori with an eager smile.

"Red Beard, you're such a slut, that's why I love you." Lori sends a kiss Rami's way and parks his ass on the armchair. "The barista was nothing. Just a fuck-foe."

"A what?" I dare ask.

"A loathe shag." He sighs at my confused expression. "When you fuck someone you don't like. It's rough and explosive. But that's it."

“Been there, got the t-shirt,” Michael declares, setting a tray full of flutes on the coffee table. Are we celebrating something else today?

“Really?” Raph appears behind him, grabbing his nape. “And who’s name is on that fucking t-shirt?”

Michael looks at him with a smirk, and then whispers something into my brother’s ear that makes his lips twitch.

“I always fuck Ollie like that—rough and explosive—but I sure as fuck don’t loathe him.” I turn to look at my boyfriend, and he gives me a peck on the lips and a look full of love.

“Stop that!” Rami tells us.

I turn and spot Gabe staring at Lori. His cold gaze focused intensely on him. Lori started working at Gabe’s firm two weeks ago. When I suggested the idea, Lori laughed his ass off, while my brother simply asked for his resume. A week later Lori was hired as an assistant, I think. Not sure. What I know is that since then, they’ve been ignoring each other.

“Wait, Luke is the brunette barista at that café on La Salle St.,” Sari says.

Uri walks into the living room, leaving the small balcony facing Lake Michigan and the cold breeze outside. “The fucker never gets our names right.”

“No barista does,” I say.

“He’s hot,” Sari blushes while saying it.

“And an asshole,” Lori clarifies.

“You can hear all about the hot barista from Lori, but it’s me you’ll think about when my cock rails your ass, kitty,” I whisper into Ollie’s ear, enjoying the tremble in his body.

“Don’t make me hard while we’re surrounded by your family, beastie.”

I fucked him a month ago when they were in the next room interrogating Lenny and Scorpion. They didn't hear anything—I built those walls thick—but they fucking knew what we were doing.

Uri didn't get much out of the shitheads. Scorpion hadn't known anything, being only the muscle. While Lenny had confirmed that the beatings had been live-streamed on the dark web, and that the Phoenix is deep into trafficking children and teens and a new type of drug.

Rami found on Lenny's cell a text exchange between him and the Phoenix with only drop off dates and times—supposedly regrading the boys—nothing more. My brother was unable to trace the location of the Phoenix's phone since it had been deactivated.

But Rami has a new lead to follow. He identified one of the two guys who kidnapped Sully from his school. A camera from a Taco Bell offered a nice frame of the fucker. Serena is looking for him and I know she'll find him.

In the meantime, I'm working on my red haze with Meg, Sari and Ollie. We are trying to find a way to control it using new cutting-edge methods. It's still early days but science fucked me up, it's only fair it'll help me now.

Michael returns from the kitchen with a bottle of champagne and starts pouring it into the glasses.

“Why are we here?” Gabe asks, taking a sip from his flute.

Michael smirks evilly his way. “To celebrate our marriage.”

Gabe jerks forward and spits some of the champagne. Fortunately, he covers his mouth, so it doesn't spray everywhere.

“Why am I always near you when this happens?” Rami whines.

“It happens often?” Lori has a very amused face while looking at a newly composed Gabe.



“Who needs to pay up?” Uri retorts. “Mike prevailed. They got married a month later when he can take his days off from work, I won.”

“Actually, we got married three days after the bet. Meg and Linda were present,” Raph reveals.

“*Three* days?” Uri teases him. “You are losing your edge, psycho bro.”

Raph flips him off and downs his champagne glass.

“Oh, that’s why you’re wearing that ring.” Sari points at Raph’s finger where there’s a white gold band with a row of stones in different shades of blue. Damn, I’ve been so taken by my own drama, I didn’t even notice that.

“Why weren’t we invited, Michael Bear-Stone?” Rami asks. “You took his name right?” He points at Raph. We all know he did. Pretty sure Raph would have even falsified the signature of his unaware husband in order to give Michael his name and make him even more his.

*Now that I think about it...*

“I did,” Michael smiles happily. “The drive to the city hall was last minute. Everybody was too busy with what was going on,” Michael explains. I nod in understanding. “How’s Sully?”

“Better.” Ollie smiles gratefully at him. “Well, congratulations.” Sari goes with Ollie to hug Michael. Lori and Rami follow soon after. Those five have gotten closer during the last month.

“We should go to one of Uri’s restaurants to celebrate,” Sari announces.

“Yes! Let’s celebrate Mipahel!” Rami shouts.

“Sure.” Uri doesn’t sound pleased about it. But he makes a call, and soon, we are all moving toward the elevator. Meg and Linda are on the way to the restaurant as well.

While Rami and Uri start arguing with Gabe and Raph about the wedding bet, and Sari and Lori are smiling excitingly at Michael as he talks about his

honeymoon in Fiji, I pull Ollie under my arm, holding him back.

He lifts his head and beams at me.

“Your surname, Truman, do you like it?” I ask.

“I hate it. It reminds me I was related to Dick.” He sighs. “I always wanted to change it.”

“Oliver *Carver* has a good ring to it, don’t you think?” I whisper and stare amused as his mouth falls open.

It’s always quite gratifying to rend Ollie speechless, even without using my cock.

*Yes, kitty, this possessive beast wants it all*, I tell him with a dark, intense look.

Then I lower my head, and with a growl, I capture his shocked breath in a kiss full of promises.

**THE END**

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## Afterword

If you liked this crazy- *amazy* love story please leave a rating and a review when you have some extra time. We, indie writers really appreciate it.

Next book in the Angels of Wrath series is Three. Who's Three, you might be wondering? He's the naughtiest of them all!

It will come out in April.

Also, One's audiobook is in the making. Yes! Raph and Michael will soon get sexy AF voices.

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## Acknowledgements

Thanks to all my readers. I feel so blessed.

I hope you enjoyed Rague and Ollie's story as much as I did while writing it. It took me almost three days to finish the car scene with Lori and Ollie, I couldn't stop laughing. Love their I-follow-you-without-questions crazy friendship. And now I have my own stalker playlist on my phone...will I ever use it? I freaking hope so.

Thank you Kari Keener Monty (we did it!) at Indie Author Creative for the hard work and Angela O'Connell for her editing magic.

Thanks also to My amazing beta reader and ARC boys and girls, all your reviews mean the world to me.

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## About the Author

I can't remember a time when I wasn't reading a book. Whether it was sci-fi, romance or a detective story didn't matter, because it was the perfect way to escape from reality for a little while. When I wasn't reading, I was imagining my own stories, and after a while I started writing them, hoping to give other people that little escape I still enjoy so much.

My books are full of gumption, laughter, sexy scenes, and always have happy endings.

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